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THE

LAND OF IDOLS:

OR,

TALKS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT INDIA.

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ac.

BY

REV. JOHN J. POOL

(*Late of Calcutta*),

AUTHOR OF

"WOMAN'S INFLUENCE IN THE EAST," "STUDIES IN MOHAMMEDANISM," ETC., ETC.

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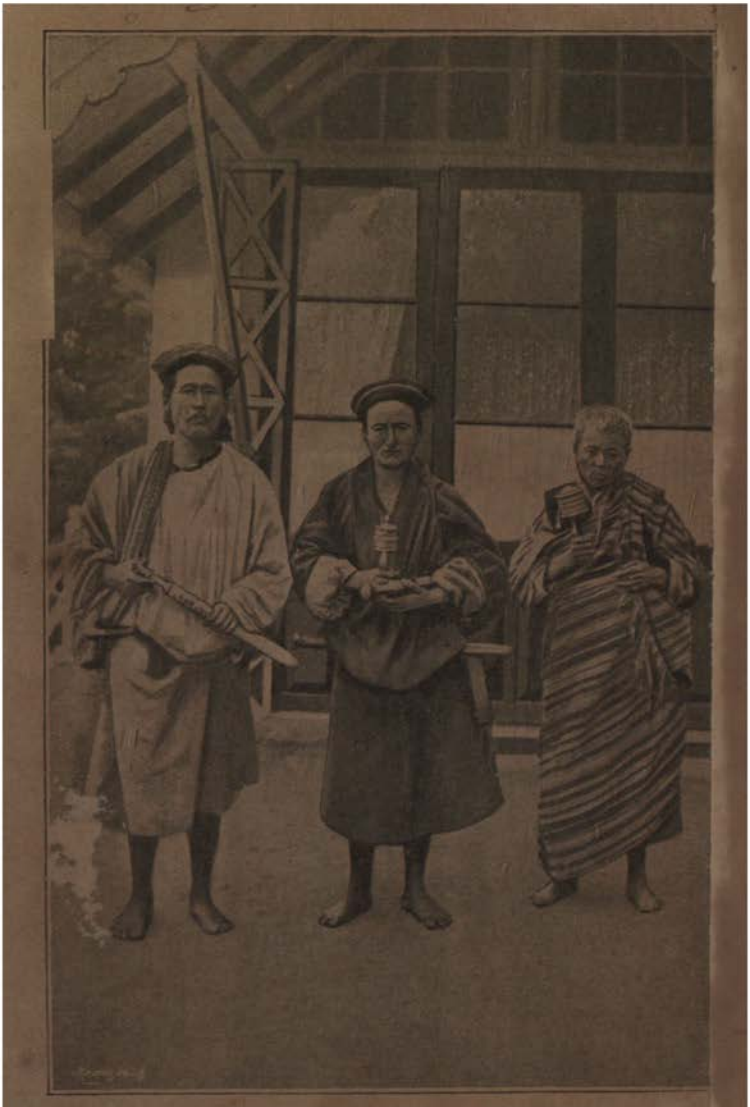

DEALERS IN PRAYER-WHEELS; DARJEELING.

THIS VOLUME

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

TO MY

FATHER.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THESE talks about India are designed to help the Missionary Forward Movement by drawing out the interest and sympathies of the young towards our great Eastern dependency.

India has exercised a remarkable fascination over many devout and ardent souls in the past; and I trust that the rising generation will be second to none in responding to the Missionary calls which come continually from the Land of Idols.

I have dealt in these pages with a variety of topics—racial, political, social, and religious—indeed, with any and every subject that I thought would throw light on life in India, and be attractive to youthful minds.

I send the book forth with a prayer for the Divine blessing to rest upon it.

JOHN J. POOL.

THE MANSE, REIMS, FRANCE.

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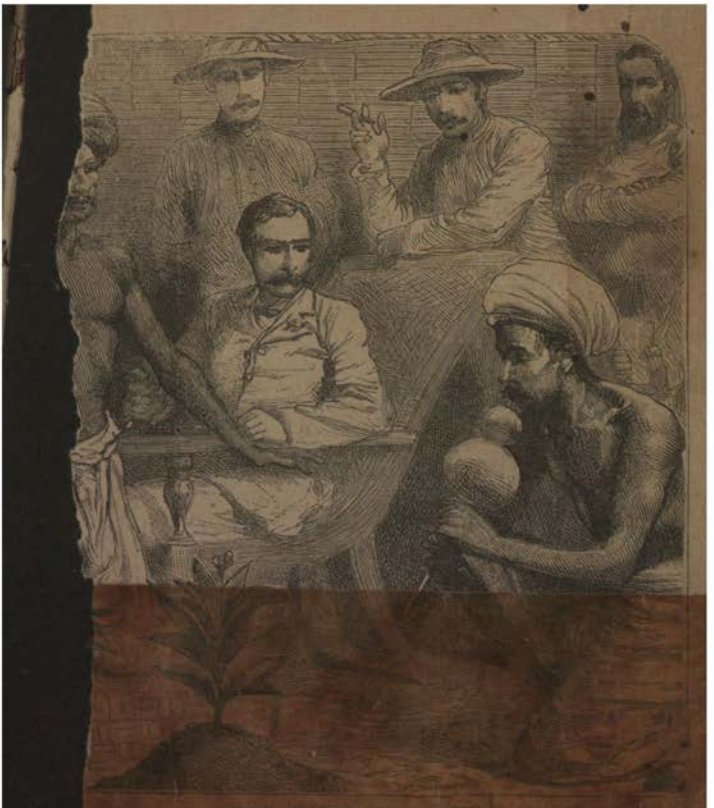


THE MANGO-TREE TRICK.

I.

CONJURING TRICKS.

THE East is the home of conjurers and jugglers, and both young and old amongst Hindus and Mohammedans take intense delight in witnessing the performances of the men and women whose whole business in life it seems to be to astonish and amuse their fellow-creatures. And I have thought

that the young people of the West would like to re
of some of the tricks of legerdemain practised by
conjurers of the East.

My first experience of conjurers was on board th
Deccan, the noble vessel on which I went out to Indi
some years ago. At Port Said, where we stopped fo
a few hours to coal, a celebrated magician came
board to show the passengers his tricks, and to ma
a little money. He had a rabbit with him which
pretended assisted him in his clever feats.

Bidding us make a circle round him, the man beg
operations by borrowing a florin from a young gentl
man who was watching the proceedings with rathe
sceptical look on his face. Having received the c
the conjurer passed it on to a young lady whom
requested to look at the silver, and to hold it so
it. The next command was
close her hand and immediately
lo! the florin had disappeared, a
was found in its place.
njurer borrowed a ring from a la
when he gave to a gentleman, who showed it to
company on the palm of his hand. To the gentlem
now came the command to close and open his han
and when he had done so, lo the ring was no more
be seen, and nothing had appeared in its place!
laugh went round the circle, and a general whisper
the effect that neither the florin nor the ring would
found again. However, the suspicion was unjust
njurer, turning to his rabbit, said, "Now rabbi
e silver and the ring." Whereupon the ra
animal opened its mouth, and to our astonis

ment out dropped the missing articles on to the deck, and were at once picked up by their respective owners.

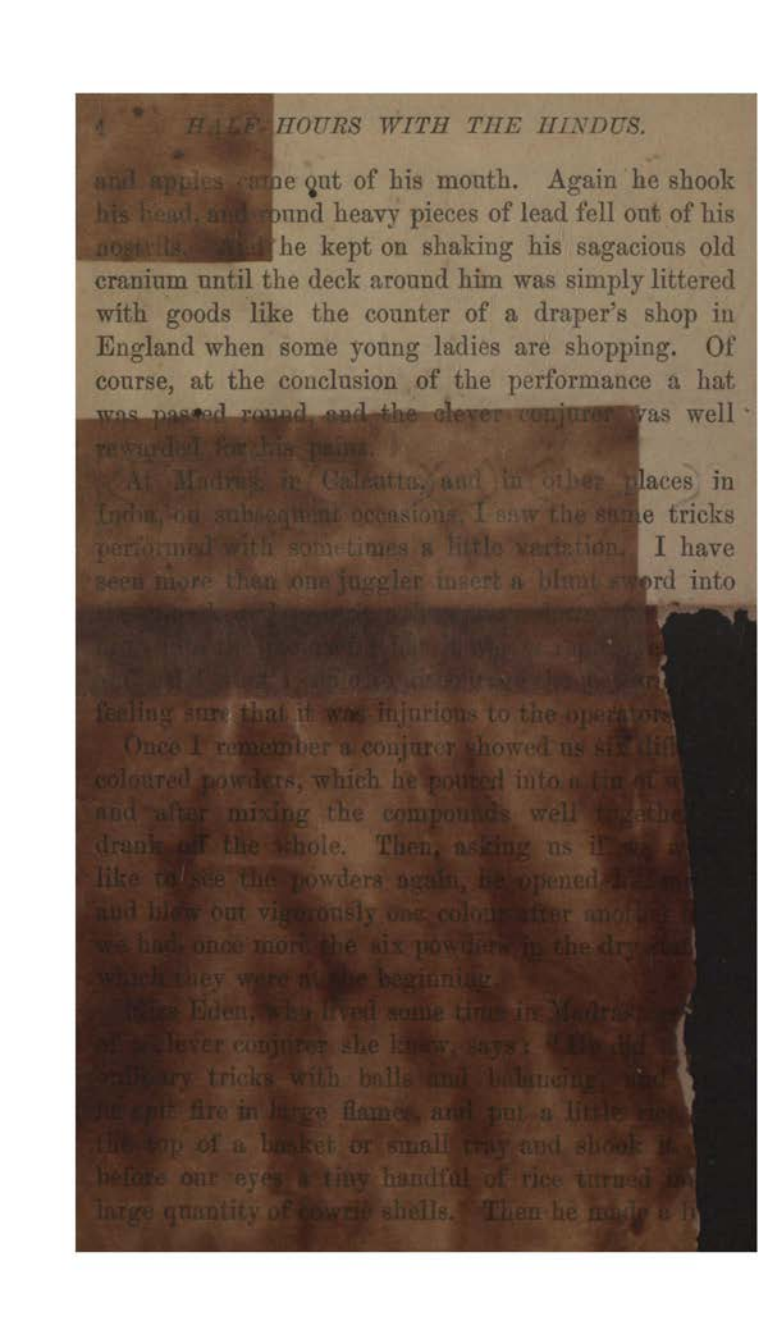
The conjurer then took off his turban or head-dress, which was a piece of muslin perhaps three yards in length, and giving one end to one person and the other to another, he requested a third party to cut the material right through the middle. This we saw carefully and thoroughly done, and yet when the two pieces were screwed up in the hands of the performer and spread out again for our inspection, not a trace of a cut could be found, but the turban was as entire as it had been at the beginning.

Next a quantity of string was cut up into little [illegible] and set fire to. This burning mass [illegible] to his mouth and pretended to swallow, all the [illegible] pouring out volumes of smoke. Suddenly the [illegible] stopped, and the man, putting his hand to his [illegible] began to pull out, in place of the string, a host [illegible] such as ribbons and bands, ending at last [illegible] a long sword. How such a stock of goods had [illegible] stowed away in his mouth passes comprehension. [illegible] conjurer then proceeded to hide a hard-boiled egg in [illegible] left hand by one of the passengers; but when [illegible] was lifted the egg had disappeared. A gold [illegible] was appealed to to find the missing [illegible] and amidst roars of laughter the [illegible] unceremoniously kicked the egg out from [illegible] hind legs.

The concluding trick was perhaps the most singular [illegible]. The conjurer put his hands behind his back, [illegible] kept them there. Then he shook his head and [illegible] fell out of his eyes. Again he shook his head,

and apples came out of his mouth. Again he shook his head, and round heavy pieces of lead fell out of his nostrils. And he kept on shaking his sagacious old cranium until the deck around him was simply littered with goods like the counter of a draper's shop in England when some young ladies are shopping. Of course, at the conclusion of the performance a hat was passed round, and the clever conjurer was well rewarded for his pains.

At Madras, in Calcutta, and in other places in India, on subsequent occasions, I saw the same tricks performed with sometimes a little variation. I have seen more than one juggler insert a blunt sword into



feeling sure that it was injurious to the operators.

Once I remember a conjurer showed us six diff coloured powders, which he poured into a tin o and after mixing the compounds well toge drank off the whole. Then, asking us if we like to see the powders again, he opened h and blew out vigorously one colour after anoth we had once more the six powders in the dry which they were at the beginning.

Miss Eden, who lived some time in Madras of a clever conjurer she knew, says: "He did ordinary tricks with balls and balancing, and put fire in large flames, and put a little the top of a basket or small tray and shook before our eyes a tiny handful of rice turned large quantity of cowrie shells. Then he made a

boy, one of my servants, sit down, and he put a small black pebble into his hand, and apparently did nothing but wave a little switch round his head, and forty rupees came tumbling out of the boy's little hands. He made him put them up again, and hold them as tight as he could; but in an instant the rupees were all gone, and a large live frog jumped out." We can imagine the dismay and disappointment of the little fellow.

In a book entitled the "Good Old Days of Honourable John Company," a few very good stories are told of conjurers. It is a book well worth reading. Let me give one or two extracts.

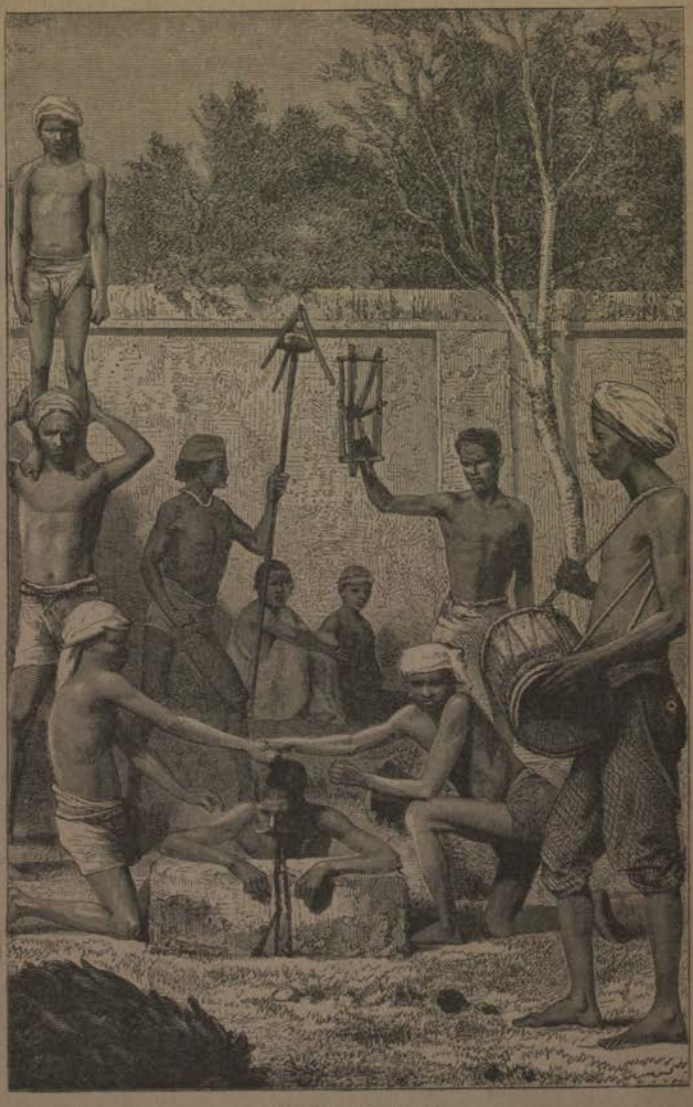
"The conjurer was seated on a white cloth. He asked some one present to produce a rupee, and to lay it down at the remote edge of the cloth. He then asked for a signet-ring. Several were offered him, and he chose out one which had a very large oval seal, projecting well beyond the gold hoop on both sides. This ring he tossed and tumbled several times in his hands, now throwing it into the air and catching it, then shaking it between his clasped hands, all the time mumbling half-articulate words in Hindustanee. Then setting the ring down on the cloth at about half arm's length in front of him, he said, slowly and distinctly, 'Ring, rise up and go to the rupee.'

"The ring rose with the seal uppermost and, resting on the hoop, slowly, with a kind of dancing or jerking motion, it passed over the cloth until it came to where the rupee lay on the remote edge; then it lay down on the coin. The conjurer thereupon said, 'Ring, lay hold of the rupee and bring it to me.' The projecting edge

of the seal seemed to grapple the edge of the coin; the ring and the rupee rose into a kind of wrestling attitude, and, with the same dancing and jerking motion, the two returned to within reach of the juggler's hand."

Another tale is still more extraordinary. It runs: "The juggler gave me a coin to hold, and then seated himself about five yards from me, on a small rug, from which he never attempted to move during the whole performance. I showed the coin to several persons who were close beside me on a form in front of the juggler. At a sign from him I not only grasped the coin I held firmly in my right hand, but crossing that hand with equal tightness with my left, I enclosed them both as firmly as I could between my knees. Of course I was positively certain that the small coin was within my double fists.

"The conjurer then began a sort of incantation, accompanied by a monotonous and discordant kind of recitative, and repeating the words, 'Ram, Sammu,' during some minutes. He then suddenly stopped, and still keeping his seat, made a quick motion with his right hand, as if throwing something at me, giving at the same time a puff with his mouth. At that instant I felt my hands suddenly distend, and become partly open, while I experienced a sensation as if a cold ball of dough or something equally soft, nasty, and disagreeable was now between my palms. I started to my feet in astonishment, also to the astonishment of others, and opening my hands found there no coin, but to my horror and alarm I saw a young snake, all alive-oh! and of all snakes in the world a cobra,



INDIAN JUGGLERS.

folded or rather coiled roundly up. I threw it instantly to the ground, trembling with rage and fear as if already bitten by the deadly reptile, which began immediately to crawl along the ground, to the alarm and amazement of every one present.

"The juggler now got up for the first time since he had sat down, and catching hold of the snake displayed its length, which was nearly two feet. He then took it cautiously by the tail, and opening his mouth to its widest extent, let the head of the snake drop into it, and deliberately commenced to swallow the reptile, till the end of the tail only was visible, then making a sudden gulp the whole disappeared. After that he came up to the spectators, and, opening his mouth wide, permitted us to look into his throat, but no snake or snake's tail was visible, and it was seemingly down his throat altogether. During the remainder of the performance we never saw the snake again, nor did the man profess his ability to make it reappear."

One of the cleverest of the conjuring feats of India is, I think, that known as the "mango trick." Mango is a most delicious fruit peculiar to the East. The conjurer will take the stone of this fruit and say, "Now, watch me, and see if I do not cause this stone to take root in the earth, and grow into a tree which shall bring forth fruit." We watch accordingly. The conjurer produces a quantity of soil, which he forms into a little hillock, and into this soil he places, with many a flourish of the hand and many an incantation, the stone of the mango.

The whole is then covered over with a cloth, under

which the man places his hands. "Grow! grow!" he exclaims, and then uncovers the earth suddenly, when we see on examination that a little shoot is pushing its way through the soil. Again the cloth is spread, and the conjurer blows over it, and mutters unintelligibly; and when we look once more we find that the little shoot has grown into a plant a few inches high. And gradually the plant becomes larger and larger, until it stands nearly a yard above the mound.

So much I have seen with my own eyes, and very wonderful it appeared to me, but I never saw a conjurer's tree bear fruit, as some have declared they have done. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his book "India Revisited," for instance, says, "The Maharajah of Benares was kind enough to send the entire company of his palace-jugglers for our entertainment. They performed with much adroitness the usual series of Hindu tricks. They made the mango-tree grow and bear fruit." I wish I had been there to witness it!

Another famous juggler's artifice is the one known as the "basket trick." On several occasions I saw this entertainment carried out to perfection. The conjurer had a wickerwork basket, in size and shape resembling a large old-fashioned beehive. This he showed to the company. Then he spoke to a handsome young girl standing by, whom he called his daughter, and bade her sit down on the floor in the centre of the room. The graceful girl obeyed after making a salaam to the company.

The man then covered her with the basket, so that she was hidden entirely from public view. Thereupon

he pretended to be angry with her for being a wilful and disobedient child, and reproached her with her undutiful behaviour. The girl replied, indignantly denying the charges; but the man only got more and more excited, and held forth threats, at which the frightened girl remonstrated, and finally asked for pardon. The juggler, however, was by this time in a towering rage, and suddenly drawing his sword he ran it through and through the basket in every direction. Shrieks of fright and pain proceeded from the girl, but the man took no heed. Wild with anger he proceeded with his deadly work, and blood was seen to trickle out from under the wickerwork, and at length a suffocating groan seemed to proclaim that the girl was at the point of death.

Nowise sobered by this, the conjurer imprecated evil on his murdered child, and coolly wiped his sword and returned it to the scabbard. Then advancing towards the basket, he kicked it over and exposed to view—the floor of the room. The girl had disappeared completely. The whole thing had been a farce. And in answer to a call from the juggler his daughter came from behind us all smiles and salaams, as scathless as any of our party, and much amused at our astonishment and surprise. At what stage of the entertainment the girl had succeeded in slipping out of the basket we could not tell. As there were no trap-doors and no curtains, the trick must be considered an exceptionally clever one.

Miss C. F. Gordon-Cumming, in her book entitled "In the Himalayas and on the Indian Plains," mentions a few conjuring tricks which she either saw or heard

She writes: "Another curious trick is to throw a cocoanut into the air and catch it on the head, when the nut shivers to atoms instead of breaking the head as might be expected. Of course this is all knack, just like breaking a poker across your arm. After this the juggler took a large earthen vessel with wide mouth, filled it with water, and turned it upside down, when all the water of course ran out. He then reversed the jar, which all present perceived to be quite full, and all the earth around was perfectly dry. He then emptied the jar and handed it round for general inspection. He bade one of the company fill it to the brim; after which he upset it, but not a drop of water flowed, nevertheless to the astonishment of all it was quite empty. This trick was shown repeatedly, and at last he broke the jar to prove that it really was nothing but the ordinary earthenware that it appeared.

"Next, a large basket was produced, and on lifting it a pariah dog lay crouching on the ground. The basket cover was replaced, and the second peep showed a litter of seven puppies with their interesting mother. A goat, a pig, and other animals successively appeared from this magic receptacle, although the exhibitor stood quite alone, in full view of all spectators."

Another trick which it is very difficult to understand is the one that consists in a man, with his feet doubled up under him, ascending, to the sound of music, into the air, and maintaining himself there with the aid of nothing but a light pole; and while in that strange position the juggler will count his beads many times over. A still more marvellous variation of this performance is related by Ibn Batuta, who says, "I

INDIAN CONJURING TRICK.

was once in the presence of the Emperor of Hindustan when two jogis entered wrapt up in cloaks with their heads covered. The Emperor caressed them, and said, pointing to me, 'This is a stranger; show him what he has never yet seen.' They answered, 'We will.' One of them then assumed the form of a cube, and rose from the earth, and in this cubic shape he occupied a place in the air over our heads. His companion then took a sandal belonging to one of those who had come out with him, and struck it upon the ground, as if he had been angry. The sandal thereupon ascended until it came opposite to the cube. It then struck the latter upon the neck, and the jogi descended gradually to the earth, and at last rested in the place which he had left. The Emperor told me that the man who took the form of a cube was a disciple to the owner of the sandal; and, continued he, 'Had I not entertained fears for the safety of thy intellect I should have ordered them to show thee greater things than these.' On this, however, I took a palpitation of the heart, until the Emperor ordered me a medicine, which restored me."

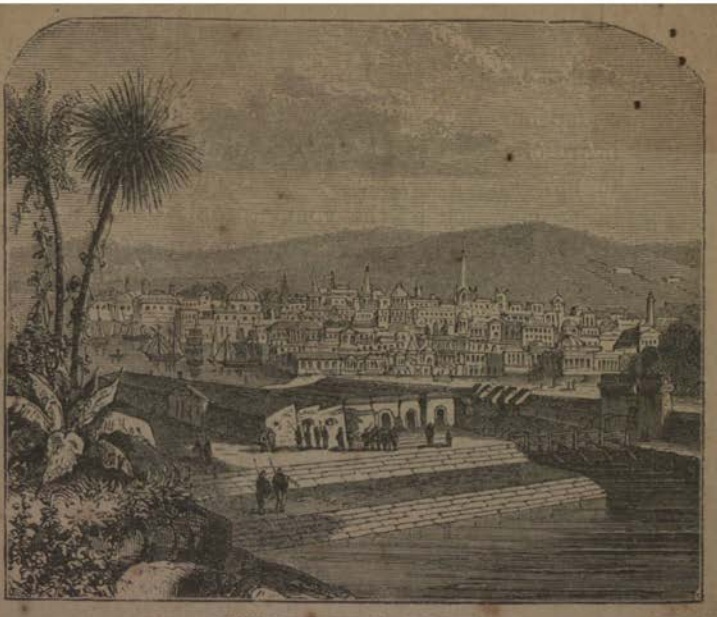
A well-known character in Calcutta many years ago was the famous conjurer Hassan Khan, who gave many private and some public performances. With a short account of this wizard's wonderful deeds I shall close this chapter. The stories are culled from "The Good Old Days of Honourable John Company," the author of which in turn took them from the columns of the Calcutta paper, *The Englishman*.

"One of Hassan Khan's tricks was to borrow a watch and transport it to some unthought-of place, and send the owner to find it. Being present at a

select party at the house of a European gentleman then residing in Upper Circular Road, he politely asked a lady to lend him her watch. Then after the usual by-play, in the view of all present he flung the watch with force from an upper verandah into a tank in front of the house. Every one saw the watch with the chain dangling whisk through the air and fall into the water. A short time after, the fair owner waxing impatient, he requested her to go into the next room and hold out her hand for it. She did so, and behold! the watch and chain, both dripping wet, came into her hand.

"At another time Hassan Khan took a watch and a ring belonging to different owners, and tied up the two in a handkerchief. After a while he pointed to a press, and enquired if it was locked and who had the key. The owner produced the key from his pocket, the press was opened, and ring, watch, and handkerchief found inside it."

But Hassan Khan could, it appears, do still more wonderful things—things passing our poor human understanding. *The Englishman* gravely tells us, that this great conjurer "could, without any regard to time, place, or circumstances, produce at will a bag of sandwiches and cakes, or wine of any mark and quality required." In every case the material supplied was the best of its kind. "Who or what this man was has never been satisfactorily explained. He went about freely, was to be seen everywhere, and mixed with all sorts of people; but he was always enshrouded in an impenetrable mystery." Surely he was what the Theosophists call a Mahatma!



GENERAL VIEW OF CALCUTTA.

II.

THE BLACK HOLE OF CALCUTTA.

CALCUTTA, the capital of British India, and the seat of the supreme government, is situated on the Hugli river, one of the mouths of the sacred Ganges, about eighty miles from the sea. It is at the present day a fine city of nearly a million inhabitants, and contains perhaps more Europeans than any other Eastern city.

It is not, however, of the present I wish to speak but of the past, and of an incident which has given an unenviable notoriety to the capital of our great

Eastern dependency. Every schoolboy and girl has surely heard of the Black Hole of Calcutta. At any rate the story of the Black Hole is one that each succeeding generation of the young people of Great Britain ought to be familiar with, as it is one of the great landmarks of our English history.

Our story takes us back to the year 1756, when Calcutta was a small town with a European population merely of a few hundreds. The English were merchants under the East India Company, and were living in Calcutta altogether for purposes of trade with the natives of the land. The East India Company provided the little band of traders with soldiers for their protection; but the force was so small that in the hour of need it was practically useless. The hour of need arose when Surajah Dowlah, a youth of twenty, who was cruel and profligate, became Viceroy of Bengal in the room of his grandfather Nawab Nazim, a wise ruler, who had been friendly towards the English, and had granted them permission to live and trade in Calcutta.

For some unknown reason the new Viceroy hated the English with a deadly hatred, and, in the month of June 1756, he marched from his capital, Moorshedabad, against Calcutta with an army of fifty thousand men. The English were totally unprepared to resist, with any hope of success, such a great force. Owing to culpable negligence, the fortifications of the town were altogether out of repair, the troops had hardly any arms, the powder was insufficient for the few guns they had, and what there was of it was not good. And the whole fighting force of the little

community only amounted to one hundred and seventy British. Just think of one hundred and seventy against fifty thousand! Were not the odds awful! And yet these few English, aided by a mere handful of native allies, kept the great army at bay for four days and four nights by sheer courage and daring. The very thought of it should make us proud of our nationality.

At midday on June 15th, 1756, the army of the young Nabob was within the bounds of the East India Company, and in a few minutes the firing commenced and was continued till nightfall. On the 16th hostilities were resumed; but it was not till the 19th that the yelling hordes of the Viceroy's army stormed the outer trenches and breastworks and reached the gates of Fort William, within which the English had taken refuge. But the fort, owing to its dilapidated condition, was not tenable, and as soon as darkness fell the European women, who would go, were safely conveyed out and embarked on a little vessel which lay in the river, which took them to a place of safety.

At midnight the besiegers advanced to the assault of the fort, but the mere sound of our drums drove them back, and they waited for the light of day ere making a more determined effort. On the 20th the final attack was made; and the English, seeing the hopelessness of further resistance, resolved to abandon Calcutta. Something like a panic then seems to have set in, and men, women, and children rushed to the water's edge with piteous cries. The few boats there were became overcrowded and soon upset, and most of the occupants miserably perished. Some few

escaped, among whom were Mr. Drake, the governor, Minchin, the commandant, and a Captain Grant.

The soldiers, however, and some of the civilians had not joined in that shameful scramble for life, so that there were left about one hundred and forty-six English in the fort, who chose as their leader a certain Mr. Holwell, one of the Company's surgeons, as brave

CALCUTTA FROM THE HUGLI RIVER.

a man as ever lived. Seeing no hope of escape, the gallant little band resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible; and such is the valour sometimes born of despair that during the morning of the 20th and until two o'clock in the afternoon the enemy was kept at bay. At that hour, however, the besieged, wearied out, threw down their arms, and prayed for mercy from their savage foes.

At five o'clock the young Nabob, Surajah Dowlah, a tyrant and a coward, entered the fort with the air of a conqueror, though he had kept at a safe distance during the fighting. The first thing the Prince did was to seat himself in the principal hall of the fort, and call Mr. Holwell into his presence. The gallant Englishman obeyed the summons with some anxiety, knowing the character of the young ruler. However, Surajah Dowlah for the moment contented himself with strong language, fiercely upbraiding the British for defending the fort, and complaining bitterly of the small amount of treasure, only £5000, which he had been able to get hold of. Two or three times the angry Prince dismissed and recalled Mr. Holwell, each time asking him "if there were no more money." The sturdy Briton invariably answered, "No"; and was finally dismissed for the night, the Nabob giving him his word as a soldier that he should suffer no harm. What the promise was worth, and how it was kept, we shall see.

When Mr. Holwell, the leader of the English, returned to his comrades, he found them surrounded by a strong guard. Then, without having a suspicion of the awful fate that awaited them, the prisoners asked where they were to be lodged for the night. In reply, the officer of the guard pointed to a room near which they stood, called the Black Hole Prison; and before the poor prisoners had even time to think they were driven at the point of the sword into the little room, the door of which was instantly shut and locked upon them.

The dungeon into which the unfortunate people had

been entrapped was only intended for an occasional military defaulter, and had never contained before more than two or three prisoners at a time, and none at all in the hot season of the year. The Black Hole was just twenty feet by twenty, and had only two small windows in it, and these were partly deprived of, or obstructed from air, by two projecting verandahs. And in this little dungeon, in the summer solstice, when the fierce heat of Bengal is scarcely endurable in the largest houses, one hundred and forty-six prisoners were huddled together like sheep in a penfold.

"Nothing in history or fiction approaches the horrors that were recounted by the few survivors of that night. They cried for mercy. They strove to burst the door. Holwell, who even in that extremity retained some presence of mind, offered large bribes to the gaolers. But the answer was that nothing could be done without the Nabob's orders; that the Nabob was asleep, and that he would be angry if any one awoke him. Then the prisoners went mad with despair. They trampled each other down, fought for places at the windows, fought for the pittance of water with which the cruel mercy of the murderers mocked their agonies, raved, prayed, and implored the guards to fire upon them. The gaolers in the meantime held lights to the bars, and shouted with laughter at the frantic struggles of their victims. At length the tumult died away in low gaspings and moanings."*

So passed that awful night of June 20th, 1756, a night which amongst Englishmen will be held in

* Lord Macaulay.

everlasting remembrance. The morning dawned, and the Nabob, having slept off his debauch, permitted the door of the Black Hole to be opened, and then a sight was witnessed which will scarcely bear to be told. Only twenty-three of the prisoners had survived the horrors of that night. There were one hundred and twenty-three dead bodies in the charnel-house, and the corpses had to be piled up on each side in heaps ere the living could crawl out. And the twenty-three survivors, it is said, were so emaciated and changed with their sufferings that their mothers would not have known them. A pit was at once dug, and the dead were flung into it with all speed and covered up.

Surely we should have thought that even the cruel Nabob would have been softened by such a sight of woe as the dead and the living presented. But neither remorse nor pity seems to have been stirred in the breast of the young savage. As soon as the dead had been buried, Surajah Dowlah called the living into his presence. The brave Holwell was amongst the number. Mrs. Carey, a lady who had refused to leave her husband when the other ladies escaped in the ship, also appeared. It was marvellous how she had lived through the night in the dungeon, when her husband and other strong men had perished.

To these two and the rest of the poor suffering creatures, the Nabob showed no tenderness or pity. Holwell, weak as he was, was loaded with irons and sent up the country, the young Prince threatening to blow him from a gun unless he revealed the hiding-place of the East India Company's treasures. Mrs. Carey was taken into the zenana of the Nabob, and

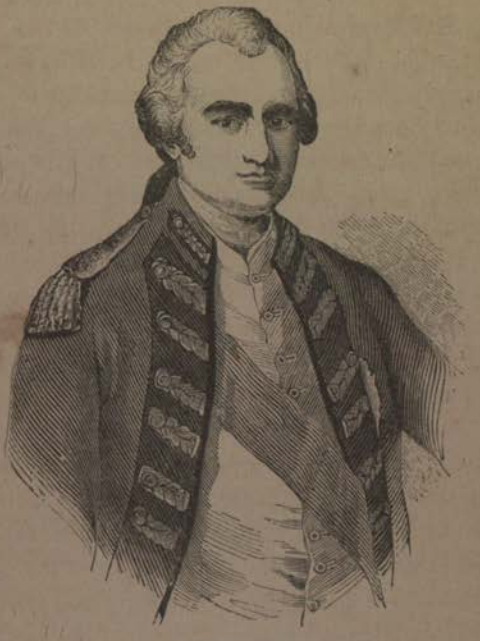
kept a prisoner for six years. The others were lodged in miserable sheds, and fed only with grain and water. However, eventually, they all regained their freedom.

And what became of the Nabob? Surely such iniquity as his would not go unpunished? No! an awful fate befell him. News of the terrible tragedy of the Black Hole travelled in course of time to Madras, where there were many British, and great was the grief, and fierce the resentment, of all who heard the horrible story. So great was the excitement, and so warm the ardour of the English community, that within forty-eight hours of the arrival of the news an expedition up the Hugli, to succour their fellow-countrymen and to punish the tyrant, had been decided upon.

And Clive, "the daring in war," quite a young soldier, was chosen to lead the rescue army of 2400 men. And bravely and successfully did he do his work. Early in 1757 the English and a few native allies fought a great battle—great in its results—with Surajah Dowlah, on the famous field of Plassey, and defeated his immense host. Even some of his own troops, instigated by one of his generals named Meer Jaffir, turned against the Prince, and assisted in his ruin.

The fact is that the profligacy of the young Nabob, his savage cruelty, and his wretched administration of the affairs of his government, had roused a deep feeling of animosity against him in every quarter. No one seemed sorry at his defeat at Plassey, and when he fled ignominiously to Moorshedabad, his capital, he felt he had no friends left, and none whom

he could trust. The same evening, therefore, giving way to craven fear, he disguised himself in a mean habit; and with a casket of jewels in his hand, he let himself down in the darkness from a window of his palace, and embarking on a little boat on the



LORD CLIVE.

river, fled for his life. The Prince was not to escape, however, out of the clutches of his enemies. Two nights after his flight, he took refuge in the hut of a poor fakir, or holy man, who recognised him at once, even through his disguise. And strange to say, the solitary hermit was a man whom the young

Nabob had treated with great cruelty only thirteen months before by depriving him of his ears.

Now the Prince was to reap what he had sown. He had sown hatred, and he was to reap hatred—he had sown cruelty, and he was to experience it—he had refused mercy to others, and now it was to be denied to himself. Notwithstanding his piteous pleadings the fakir kept him a prisoner, and sent word to his enemies of his whereabouts. The next morning troops sent by Meer Jaffir, who had usurped the vacant throne, captured the guilty and terrified Nabob, who after being subjected to every possible indignity, was carried back as a felon to his own palace, and dragged before the usurper.

It is said that Meer Jaffir, moved with pity, was inclined to spare the life of the wretched Prince, but a son of the new ruler would not hear of such a thing, saying that the throne of Bengal would not be safe while Surajah Dowlah lived. So sentence of death was passed. But it was in plain words a murder; and Meeran, the son of Meer Jaffir, was the murderer. Meeran was only seventeen years of age when he did the horrid deed. At midnight he entered the chamber where his Prince was confined. The unfortunate Surajah Dowlah saw the purpose of his visitor in his eye, and begged for a few minutes' respite for prayer; but even that was denied him. Meeran sprang upon his victim with a cry of hate, and with a few stabs of his dagger slew him.

In the morning the bloody remains of the Nabob were exposed through the city of Moorshedabad on an elephant, after which they were thrown into a

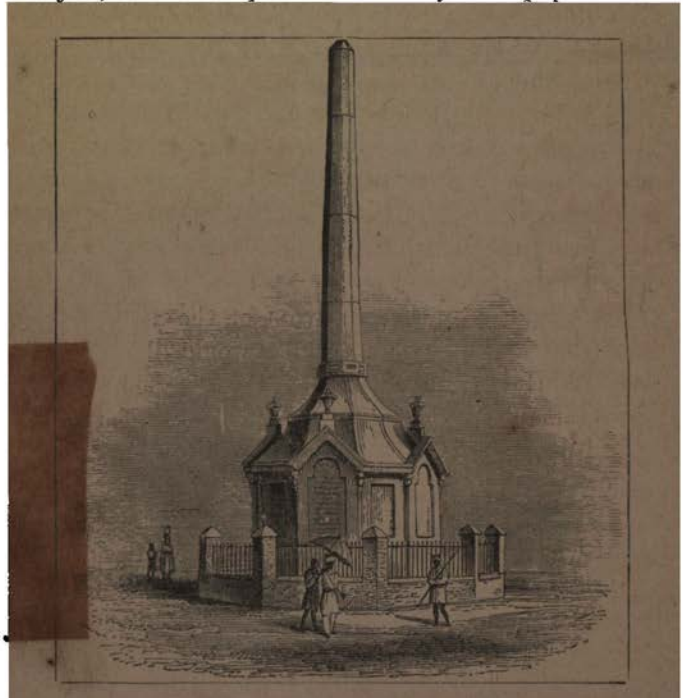
dishonoured grave. Thus was the tragedy of the Black Hole of Calcutta terribly avenged, and the deed was the work of the young Prince's own countrymen! The gallant Clive would never have committed such a crime, and Meer Jaffir knew it, and sent to the English commander a letter of apology for the fierce conduct of his son and heir. Wicked and cruel as Surajah Dowlah was, we cannot but regret his violent death. Yet *he* had no pity on the hundred and twenty-three victims that perished in the Black Hole. The infamy of the Prince was very great, and his awful death had all the appearance of a judgment, and brought into clear relief the truth of the saying, "The way of transgressors is hard."

With regard to the survivors of the Black Hole tragedy, I think my young readers would like to know that Mr. Holwell lived until 1798, a period of over forty years after the dreadful event. This gentleman erected at Calcutta an obelisk fifty feet high, to the memory of his martyred comrades, which stood for years in the north-west corner of Tank Square, but was at length pulled down in 1840 by the order of the Marquis of Hastings. It is believed to have been erected on the very spot where the bodies of the slain were buried.

Mrs. Carey, the only lady mentioned in history in connection with the tragedy, was the last of the survivors. She outlived the twenty-two by many years, and died in Calcutta on March 28th, 1801. What a life hers was of suffering and sorrow!

And what of the famous Black Hole itself? Well, it is supposed to have been demolished soon after the

day of the awful tragedy that was enacted therein, and for generations its very site was a matter of doubt. However, in the year 1883 some old papers were found in the Record Office which threw light on the subject, and the spot indicated by the papers was



MONUMENT ONCE ON THE SITE OF THE BLACK HOLE.

excavated, with the result that the underground walls of the dungeon were discovered. I had just reached Calcutta when the discovery was made, and one of my first visits was to the spot which must ever be sacred to the memory of our gallant forefathers who

there so miserably perished. The walls were then bare, though they have been covered since with earth; and I walked along them, and measured them, and found the building to have been barely twenty feet square.

I stayed there some time, thinking of the past, thinking of the dead, thinking of the savage young Prince, Surajah Dowlah, and of his poor victims, my own fellow-countrymen. And visitors to Calcutta to-day, if they will enter a wide gateway on one side of the General Post Office, will find a square carefully marked out in white stones, which indicates the exact spot and dimensions of the Black Hole of sad memory. The whole incident should speak to us on the one hand of the hideousness of war, and of the awful consequences of human passions uncontrolled and unrestrained; and on the other of splendid courage, daring, and endurance.

A GHAUT AT BENARES, WITH RECESSES FOR DEVOTEES.

III.

IDOLS, IDOLS EVERYWHERE.

IF one were asked to describe India, I think the first remark that would spring from one's lips would be—"It is a land of idols! There are idols, idols everywhere!" I can well remember as a boy that at a certain missionary meeting in England, when the missionary held up two or three idols for our inspection, I greatly marvelled at the sight, and wondered whether I should ever visit India and see idolatry for myself in all its power and degradation.

And now that I have been in the East my astonishment is no whit lessened at the fact that so many millions of boys and girls, young men and maidens, and older people, human beings like ourselves, can bow down before gods of wood and stone and brass. Idolatry seems to have a fascination for the Hindus; it is the very air they breathe; it is the food of their souls. They are the willing slaves of custom in this respect, for the common people of India, it is easy to be seen, are passionately interested in and devoted to the worship and service of idols.

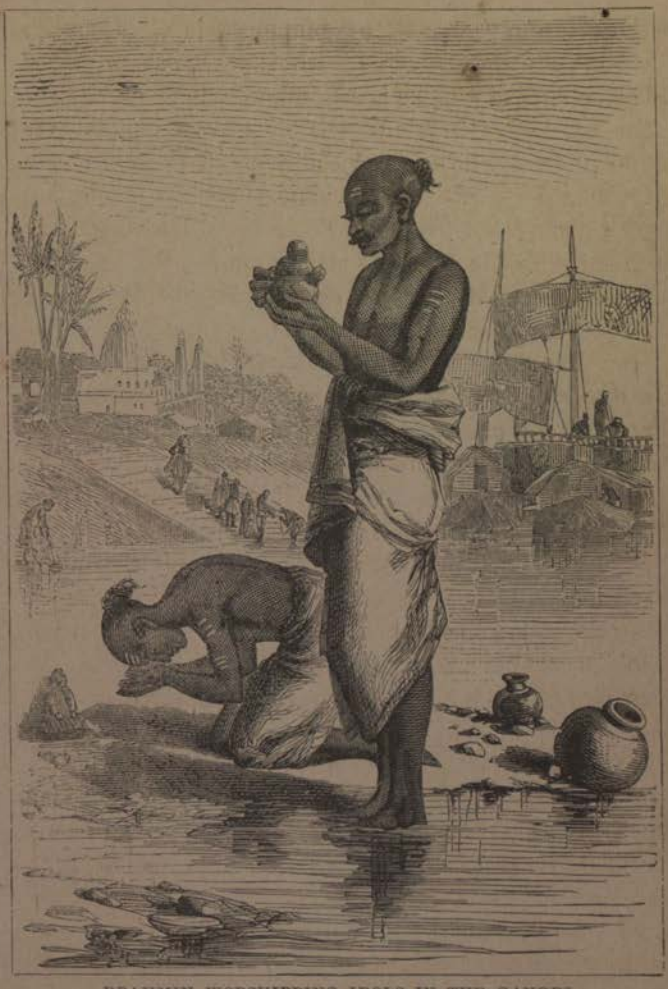
The late Rev. M. A. Sherring, of Benares, in his well-known book entitled "The Sacred City of the Hindus," says: "Indeed the love for idolatry is so deep-seated and intense in the breasts of the people, that it is a common thing for both men and women to amuse themselves with manufacturing little gods from mud and clay, and after paying divine honours to them, and that too with the same profound reverence which they display in their devotions before the well-known deities of the temples, to throw them away."

Mr. Sherring then gives a striking instance in proof of his assertion. He says: "One day on entering the courtyard of the temple of Annpúrná, the Goddess of Plenty, my attention was arrested by an aged woman seated on the ground in front of a small clay figure, which, I ascertained, she had with her own hands manufactured that morning, and to which she was solemnly paying homage. Close by was a brazen vessel containing water, into which every now and then she dipped a small spoon, and then gently poured

a few drops upon the head of the image. She then reverently folded her hands, and muttered words of prayer, occasionally moving one hand to her face, and with finger and thumb compressing her two nostrils, in order that, holding her breath as long as possible, she might increase the merit of her worship and the efficacy of her prayer. Having completed her devotions she rose, took the image which she had worshipped in her hands, and threw it away as of no further use."

So strong in fact in the Hindus is this passion for worshipping something they can see and handle, that they will almost use anything for an idol. I have heard of a Hindu gentleman in South India who wanted to get possession of an English doll for purposes of worship. The doll had been given by a missionary lady to a native Christian girl as a prize for good conduct at school. The little girl had carried it home, of course, and shown it to her friends with great glee, little thinking any one would wish to deprive her of it. A neighbour, an acquaintance of her father, however, having seen the doll, took a fancy to it, thinking it would make a capital idol, and tried to bribe the little girl into parting with it. The child refused, though offered the equivalent of ten shillings for it; and had the courage to tell the man that he was foolish to worship idols at all, and that he would show wisdom by putting his trust in Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world. The Hindu sharply replied, "I don't want your Christ, but only that pretty image, if you will sell it to me."

It would be impossible to compute the number of



BRAHMIN WORSHIPPING IDOLS IN THE GANGES.

idols that there must be at the present time in India. The Hindus pretend to have 333,000,000 gods, and

these are represented by innumerable idols, so that we are quite bewildered with the thought of taking the census of the idols of India. The population of the whole Indian Empire is now about 300,000,000, and probably the country contains ten times as many idols as people. The world is therefore a long way off the fulfilment of that Bible prophecy which says, "And the idols shall He utterly abolish."

Benares is the great centre of the idol-making business, though in all parts of India the trade flourishes. Potters the day through may be seen in the sacred city moulding images of clay for temporary use. Sculptors also may be found producing representations of the gods in stone or marble. Carpenters, moreover, make great wooden idols for the temples; and workers in metal—goldsmiths, coppersmiths, and brassworkers—turn out more or less highly-finished specimens in their respective metals.

"Special value," one writer says, "attaches to golden images of certain gods and goddesses, while for others, copper or brass, or an amalgam of mercury and tin, is preferred. Sitala, the goddess of Small-pox, is always represented in silver; but the most sacred of all materials for the manufacture of gods is a perfect alloy produced by mixing eight metals—viz., gold, silver, brass, lead, iron, tin, mercury, and copper."

I have heard it whispered in more than one quarter, that many of the idols that are worshipped in India are manufactured in England; but I would fain believe that the report is not correct, for I do not like to think ill of my fellow-countrymen. Miss Cumming,

in her book entitled "In the Himalayas and on the Indian Plains," speaking of some images offered to her by a vendor of idols in Benares, says, "I strongly suspect that every little idol in his basket was pure 'Brummagem,' and not without reason, for it is currently reported that Birmingham exports an immensely large proportion of the idols of Hindustan, and finds them a very profitable speculation." Again I would remark that I hope the report is incorrect. If the people of India will have idols to worship, it is certainly not for Christian England to supply them.

When speaking of idols it should be borne in mind that the images turned out by the potter, sculptor, carver, or manufacturer, are not considered sacred or fit to be worshipped, until certain mystic words have been uttered over them by a priest. The ceremony of "the giving of life," as it is called, to the image, is a very solemn affair, and when it is done the idol is regarded as holy, and must ever afterwards be approached and treated with the utmost reverence.

Out of the many millions of so-called gods in India, all of whom are counted worthy of worship, three are regarded as specially sacred, and form the Hindu Triad or Trinity. They are respectively Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Of these, it is stated, the second person of the Trinity only has been represented on this earth by human incarnations. Through one or all of these gods the Hindus believe they may obtain salvation. Brahma represents the way of salvation by wisdom, Vishnu by faith, and Siva by works. It is immaterial which method is adopted, as they all lead to the same goal.

And from what do the Hindus wish or hope to be saved? Well, I can say, once for all, that it is not, generally speaking, from sin. "The idols are not worshipped for spiritual blessings, holiness, and aids to moral culture, but to obtain exemption from the physical evils of life—relief from sickness, victory over enemies, healthy children, wealth, good luck, worldly gain, temporal prosperity. According to the philosophical system of Hinduism, only temporal benefits are to be obtained from worshipping idols." The Hindus have not yet realised that "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Soon after I landed on Indian soil it was my lot to obtain possession of an idol, under most interesting circumstances. It was at Madras, where I had gone on shore to visit a college friend who had preceded me to India by a year or so. My friend told me how his heart had been cheered by a Hindu, whom he knew, forsaking idolatry, and becoming a follower of Christ. I rejoiced with him, and in course of conversation asked what the new convert would do with his old household idols. For reply I was asked if I would like to possess one of them, as a memento of the event, and of my visit to Madras. I promptly answered "Yes"; and my friend brought from another room a tiny brass idol, and, placing it in my hand, said, "Take it, and welcome. It was given to me by the new convert, but I am sure he will not mind my giving it to you."

The idol that I thus obtained possession of, and have yet, represents Ganesha, the god of Wisdom.

Ganesha is said to have been a son of Siva. He sits cross-legged, and has many arms; but the strangest thing about him is that he has the head and trunk of an elephant. The story told concerning this god is, that he was originally born with a human head, but having been deprived of it by his father, in a fit of anger, his mother vowed to supply its place with the head of the first living creature she met. This proved to be an elephant; and with the head of the elephant, Ganesha is credited with receiving the wisdom of this ungainly but sagacious animal. Ganesha is very popular in India, and his shrine may be found in every village throughout the length and breadth of the land. He is worshipped by every schoolboy, for is he not the god of wisdom, the master of caligraphy, and the patron of literature?

The second idol that came into my possession, and this time by purchase, represents even a more popular god than Ganesha. His name is Krishna, and he is the favourite idol of all the women, as well as the boys and girls, of Hindustan. And yet from all accounts the character of this god is not of the best. The image that I own represents him as quite dark in colour—it has been suggested to me that he is painted black on account of his sins. Of this god, and especially of his escapades in the days of childhood and youth, a pretty full account will be found in a later chapter in this book.

The idols of India, it will already have been noticed, are not confined to the male sex. There are quite a number of goddesses as well as gods in the Hindu Pantheon. Perhaps the principal may be said to be

Sarasvati the wife of Brahma, Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu, and Kali the wife of Siva. The first is the goddess of Knowledge, the second of Love and Prosperity, and the third—well, it is difficult to say what she is the goddess of, for though she is familiarly called Mother Kali, she delights in blood, and revels in the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes. Kali is generally represented as standing on the body of her husband,

BRAHMA AND SARASVATI.

with her tongue protruding from her mouth, her hair hanging far down her back, and with a wreath of skulls round her neck. Truly this notorious idol is horrible to look upon, and to think about. To speak of her as "Mother" seems blasphemy. The Hindu scriptures tell some dreadful tales of her wicked doings; and if space permitted I might relate some sad stories of the infamous deeds of numbers of her worshippers, who have been robbers and murderers.

At one time it is said even little children were offered up in sacrifice to this bloodthirsty idol.

Idols are of course worshipped both privately and publicly. And both in the house and the temple they are treated with the greatest respect and the profoundest reverence. It would be amusing, if it were not so sad, to notice with what care the make-believe gods and goddesses of India are looked after both by day and night. Mr. B. Chunder, in his book entitled "The Travels of a Hindu," tells of the princely magnificence with which an image of Krishna was treated in a temple called Kundu in Bengal.

The writer says: "Of all the shrines the one at Kundu is maintained with the greatest liberality. The god here seems to live in the style of the Great Moghul. His throne and pillows are of the best velvet and damask, richly embroidered. Before him are placed gold and silver salvers, cups, tumblers, and jugs of various size and pattern. He is fed every morning with fifty kinds of curries, and ten kinds of pudding. His breakfast over, gold hookahs are brought to him to smoke the most aromatic tobacco. He then retires for his noonday nap. In the afternoon he tiffs and lunches, and at night before he goes to bed he sups upon the choicest and richest viands." The Brahmins, of course, get all these good things, though the farce is kept up of the idols having excellent appetites, so that the foolish worshippers may not be slack in finding the money for their support. When will such a mockery of religion come to an end?

The mention of the Brahmins or priests reminds me of the fact that even these gentlemen come in for a

share of worship themselves, for the common people of India look upon the members of the highest caste as veritable gods. The Brahmins are living idols, whom the lower classes are degraded enough to worship. The Hindu Scriptures say,

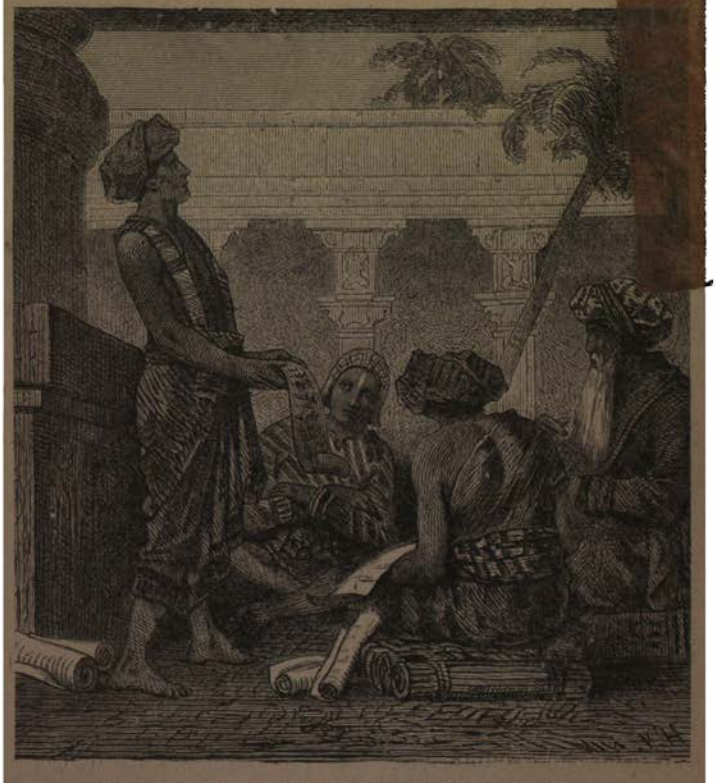
> "Before the Brahmins bow with awe,
> Esteem their every word as law,
> For they shall prosper all, who treat
> The Priests with filial reverence meet.
>
> "Yea, though they servile tasks pursue,
> To Brahmins high esteem is due.
> For be he stolid as a clod
> A Brahmin is a mighty god."

Mr. Minturn, in his book "From New York to Delhi," relates how he met a Brahmin who actually laid claim to divine attributes. "One day," says the traveller, "while we were eating under a grove, a great dirty fellow, smeared with cow-dung and wearing the sacred Brahminical thread over his shoulder, with no clothing but a rag six inches wide, marched boldly up to us and asked for money. I, being paymaster, wanted to know 'What for?' when he answered as coolly as possible, 'Because I am a god and am hungry.' If I could have mastered Hindustanee enough I would have told him that if his divine character could not protect him from hunger it certainly should not secure him unmerited charity."

The Hindus have a syllogism in honour of Brahmins which runs thus:

> "The whole world is under the power of the *gods*,
> The gods are under the power of the *mantras*,
> The mantras are under the power of the Brahmin,
> The Brahmin is therefore our God."

The Rev. W. Ward, in his "History of the Hindus," says, "When the claims of the Brahmins to deity have been disputed by any one, I have seen



BRAHMINS, THE HIGHEST CASTE AMONG THE INDIANS.

poor besotted Sudra prostrate himself at the feet of the nearest Brahmin, and raising his head and closing his hands, say, 'You are my god.' At the same

time the character of the Brahmin has perhaps been [illegible]us for every vice."

[illegible]ving the animate idol, the Brahmin, let us now [illegible]for a little space to the further consideration of [illegible]inate idols. The Hindus have descended even to [illegible]orship of mud. Ponder over an incident related by the Rev. J. D. Bate, a Baptist missionary in India. He says: "A while ago I was making my way to a village called Lokipore, about twenty miles to the west of Allahabad, for the purpose of preaching. On emerging from a field I saw a little way in front of me what I took at first to be the dry trunk of a very tall tree that had been denuded of leaves and branches. Going a few steps nearer I thought I detected high up what had the appearance of the rude outline of a human face, but very large; and on coming close to the object I saw what it really was. It was a huge round pile of mud, dug up from a ditch near by, and dried in the sun. *It was an idol.* On the top of the pile the eyes and nose had been scratched by the finger when the mud was soft, and for a mouth there was a broad, deep gash, right across the face from one side to the other. For ears, a couple of pieces of broken pitcher had been stuck in so as to project on either side of the head and curve forwards.

"Legs there were none: it was merely a trunk built up from the ground. For arms, a couple of long pieces of bamboo had been stuck into the sides so as to project at right angles, and at the end of each of these primitive-looking limbs there was another pile of mud much smaller in its proportions: the arms were supported by these piles." The missionary stood in

amazement and sorrow before this scarecrow, thinking of the sin and shame of such idolatry, when a loud voice came from among the trees of a neighbouring flower-garden asking him why he gazed so intently upon the god. It was a Brahmin priest who spoke.

Mr. Bate answered, "A god! You call this a god?" "Yes," said the priest, "it is a god; it is holy; it has stood where it is for seven years, and it is an object of adoration to those who are looking to me for instruction and guidance in the path of salvation." Was there ever such folly? We may well say that the Hindus are given up altogether to idolatry, when they will worship anything, from a man to the mud upon the roadside.

It has been questioned whether the Hindus really regard idols as gods and goddesses. Sir Edwin Arnold, who looks through rose-coloured spectacles at everything Eastern, says that they do not. In his "India Revisited" he remarks: "All these various sacred objects are for the educated Indians mere 'aids to faith,' manifestations, more or less appropriate and elevated, of the all-pervading and undivided Para-Brahm. Even the poor peasant of the fields, and the gentle Hindu wife, perambulating a peepul-tree smeared with red, will tell you that the symbol they reverence is only a symbol. There is hardly one of them so ignorant as not to know that commonplace of Vedantism, 'Every prayer which is uttered finds its way to the ears of Kâshavá.'"

I think that Sir Edwin Arnold is wrong, and that the common people of India are more ignorant and superstitious than he realises. Most of the lower

I am convinced, believe that when they worship gods and goddesses, ... represented by the idols, but as actually ... in the idols. Doubtless the educated know ... the idols merely as symbols, but ... outwardly worship the symbols. ... English-speaking natives I have talked with ... have tried to justify their idolatry by ... have symbols to represent God ...

The Rev. James Kennedy, in his book entitled "Life and Work in Benares," commenting on this subject, says: "Hindus who know English have quoted Cowper's address to his mother on getting her picture, 'Oh that those lips had language!' and have then asked, 'Was not Cowper helped in realising his mother when looking at her picture?' To which there is the obvious reply, 'Cowper's mother was truly represented by her picture. Is God truly and fittingly represented by the idols the Hindus worship?'" Surely not! What is there in the ugly, grotesque idols of Hindustan to help any man, woman, or child in understanding God, or in worshipping God? If men will have symbols of God as aids to faith, then let the symbols be such as will inspire lofty thoughts. In my opinion, however, we do not need symbols of gold, or silver, or wood, or stone, or mud. These material substances, experience has taught us, always foster low and materialistic views of the Divine Father. Idolatry is folly!

> "Men cannot know from whence they came,
> Else they would never call the sun

Or moon their God. They would not bow
To idols made of clay, or mud
Baked in the fire. No image made
Of stone or wood, no linga stump,
Built up of earth and made by hand,
Could ever seem Divine to one,
Who knew he came from God."

"How mad are they who offer praise
To carven stones! As if such things
Could fitly image God Most High."

The great work before Christian labourers in India is, then, to educate the people, especially the young people of the land, and to turn their thoughts to Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." There cannot be a doubt that the spread of Western knowledge in the East is undermining the faith of Hindus in idolatry. The education given to young men in government and missionary schools and colleges inspires in the breasts of the more thoughtful among them a thorough distaste for idolatry, and a latent desire to be free from it. A great reformer is needed. There are, I believe, tens of thousands of young Hindus ready for a wonderful change, if only a mighty leader would appear from their own race to inspire them with courage and daring.

While idolatry is still almost universal in India, we are safe, I think, in saying that in all classes of society, amongst both the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, there is less reverence for idols than of yore. A Hindu gentleman in South India said lately to a missionary, "Upwards of twenty or thirty years ago, we, both men and women, had a great reverence for idols, but that reverence is failing even

when we see them in temples, because we know now that they are nothing more than the material with which they are made—that is, wood, stone, copper, or gold. The foolishness of bygone days is gradually giving way, and things are viewed now as they actually exist. You ask, How have we come to this? I will tell you. It is through the influence of the Gospel of Christ which is being regularly preached amongst us."

Then in North India the Rev. E. Greaves, writing not very long ago of a tour he had made in the Benares district, said: "During the last year we visited many villages, where we had been in previous years, and also went over much that was, to us, fresh ground. On some few occasions we were met by opposition and rudeness; this, however, was quite exceptional. It was inspiring now and again to hear a village group giving their assent to all that was said, and confessing that it was God alone who could save them. In one village some men said, 'This is quite new to us, and very good; we will not worship idols any more.' On another occasion I put my hearers' genuineness to the test, by asking them to grant me permission to fling their idols into a pond close by. Superstition was too strong, however, and they begged me not to touch them. 'What!' said I, 'could they not protect themselves if they were gods?' The people did not dispute my logic, but declined to give me the coveted permission. God grant that the day may soon come when they will themselves break down their idols, and worship, in spirit and in truth, the great God and Saviour."

Even from the purely native state of Hyderabad a story comes of the growing lack of faith in idols. Some lads who had been taught to read and write in a mission school, when sent out into the fields by their parents to tend cattle, tested the power of certain gods and goddesses they found by the road side, by asking them to take charge of the animals for an hour or two, while they themselves engaged in play. The little fellows found, however, to their dismay, that while their backs had been turned the cattle had wandered into forbidden ground, and had eaten up some standing corn. Conscious of their own negligence, and yet vexed with their idols for not being more watchful, the lads removed the images from their places; and becoming still more bold, they banged one idol against another, and left the two lying ignominiously on the ground.

FIGURE OF HINDU PRAYING.
From Temple at Madura.

When asked by their parents the cause of such an outrage, the bold little fellows exclaimed with one voice, "Because the gods did not

mind the cattle while we were at play!" The elder people waited a few days with trembling anxiety to see what disasters the gods would call down upon their households for such iniquity, but as nothing happened, a suspicion was generated all round that perhaps after all the children were right, and that the idols were powerless to do either good or harm.

Idolatry in India is doomed, for it cannot stand before the light of education spreading in the land, before the truth, "as the truth is in Jesus." Reforms move slowly in the East, however. Christian workers must not be over-sanguine of immediate success on a large scale, but must labour on diligently, wisely, and lovingly, believing that in due season they shall reap if they faint not. It will be a glorious day for India, when the Hindus as one man shall cast their idols all away!

IV.

BUTTOO, THE FAMOUS ARCHER.

THE Land of Idols has a history going back thousands of years, and of that past we read in such Hindu works as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Vedas, which are religious books of considerable merit, though containing a great mass of superstitious and strange, grotesque stories of the doings of gods and men.

Amongst other stories dealing with life in ancient India, I have been particularly struck with one very beautiful and human one, which I am sure my young readers will peruse with interest and delight. It is the pathetic story of Buttoo, the famous archer. I

tell the tale now to show something of the manners and customs of the people of India in years long gone by, and also to serve as an illustration of three very desirable virtues which all young people should possess —viz., self-help, truth, and modesty.

Buttoo was born many centuries ago, and belonged to the lowest of the mixed orders of humankind in India. Then as now existed the hateful system of caste, which legally separates the different classes of Hindu society. Originally there were four great castes, which can be described briefly, as (1) the priestly, (2) the soldier, (3) the merchant, and (4) the servant castes. These four classes, the law says, cannot eat or drink together, cannot intermarry, and cannot even touch each other accidentally without defilement. Caste has been the curse of India, the cause of many of its bitterest woes. It has dried up the wells of human sympathy, separated man from man, and opposed itself to everything approaching wide brotherly love, leading men to say one to another: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence."

Poor Buttoo, the hero of our story, was of the lowest caste, and consequently to all who were not of the same caste he was an object to be looked upon with not a little scorn, a being to be crushed and trampled upon by proud Brahmins. From his earliest years, according to the chronicles, Buttoo had been thoughtful and rather reserved, and seemed very different from the majority of the boys who were his playmates.

And when he had passed the age of fourteen the difference became more marked. His friends could see that he was a boy who thought much, who had within him a noble soul, and who was evidently seeking earnestly to be good and great.

The grand ambition of youth at the time Buttoo lived was to be skilful in all warlike pursuits. The state of the country was very unsettled, and men were suspicious of their neighbours, and safety for life and property lay in being able to defend them. And the road to wealth and fame was the trade of war. Now Buttoo, though different from many youths in the majority of things, was at one with them in desiring to be a mighty warrior, whose name should be known far and wide. Only he desired that his path to glory might not be sullied with any cruelty or any crime. As a hunter's son, of course, he was early trained in the use of various weapons, and especially in the use of the bow, with which he became exceedingly skilful. Amongst his companions few could equal him in skill in archery, and none could beat him.

But skilful as the young man became he was not satisfied, for stories reached him of still more marvellous skill to which many youths of the higher castes had attained. From one quarter, in particular, news came which set his heart on fire and which made him long to leave his home that he might see, and if possible imitate, the exploits of others.

Of all the great teachers of archery of whom Buttoo could hear anything, the mighty Drona was the acknowledged head and chief. And Drona was the teacher of the Bharata princes, whose capital city

was Hastinapore. For years Drona had been giving lessons to the royal youths, and had brought them to a wonderful state of proficiency. But though all the princes were skilful, one, Arjuna by name, far eclipsed his brethren, and was the joy of his old teacher's heart. Let us take, by way of example, one occasion when Arjuna's superiority was shown. Drona one day gathered his pupils together, and declared that he wanted to test their abilities. Fixing an artificial vulture on the top of a neighbouring tree, he said, "Children, take up your bows quickly, and stand here aiming at that bird on the tree, with arrows fixed on your bow-strings; shoot and cut off the bird's head as soon as I give the order. I shall give each of you a turn, one by one."

Yudhisthira, the eldest, was the first to step forward, and stood aiming at the bird as his preceptor directed. Then came the question: "Dost thou behold, O Prince, that bird on the top of the tree?" "I do," was the answer. But when asked again, "What dost thou now see? seest thou the tree, myself, or thy brothers?" Yudhisthira replied, "I see the tree, thyself, my brothers, and the bird." And no matter how often the question was asked, the same answer was given by the prince, until the preceptor was annoyed, and said sharply, "Stand thou aside, thou canst not hit the bird." Then the other princes, except Arjuna, were called forward, but in every case the same words were uttered: "We behold the tree, thyself, our fellow-pupils, and the bird." At last came the turn of Arjuna, and Drona looking upon him smilingly said, "By thee the bird must be hit—

get ready; but first tell me, seest thou the bird there, the tree, and myself?"

And Arjuna replied, "I see the bird only, but not the tree or thyself." Then the preceptor laughed, and pleasantly asked again, "If thou seest the vulture, then describe it to me." And Arjuna answered, "I only see the head of the vulture, which thou hast commanded me to hit, and not its body." At these words Drona was beside himself with pride in his pupil's skill. "Shoot!" he cried, "Shoot!" and the sharpened shaft from the young man's bow went straight to its mark, and down upon the ground fell the head of the vulture; and Arjuna was declared the prince of archers. Then Drona, the preceptor, vowed, earnestly and solemnly, that no living being should surpass Arjuna in skill.

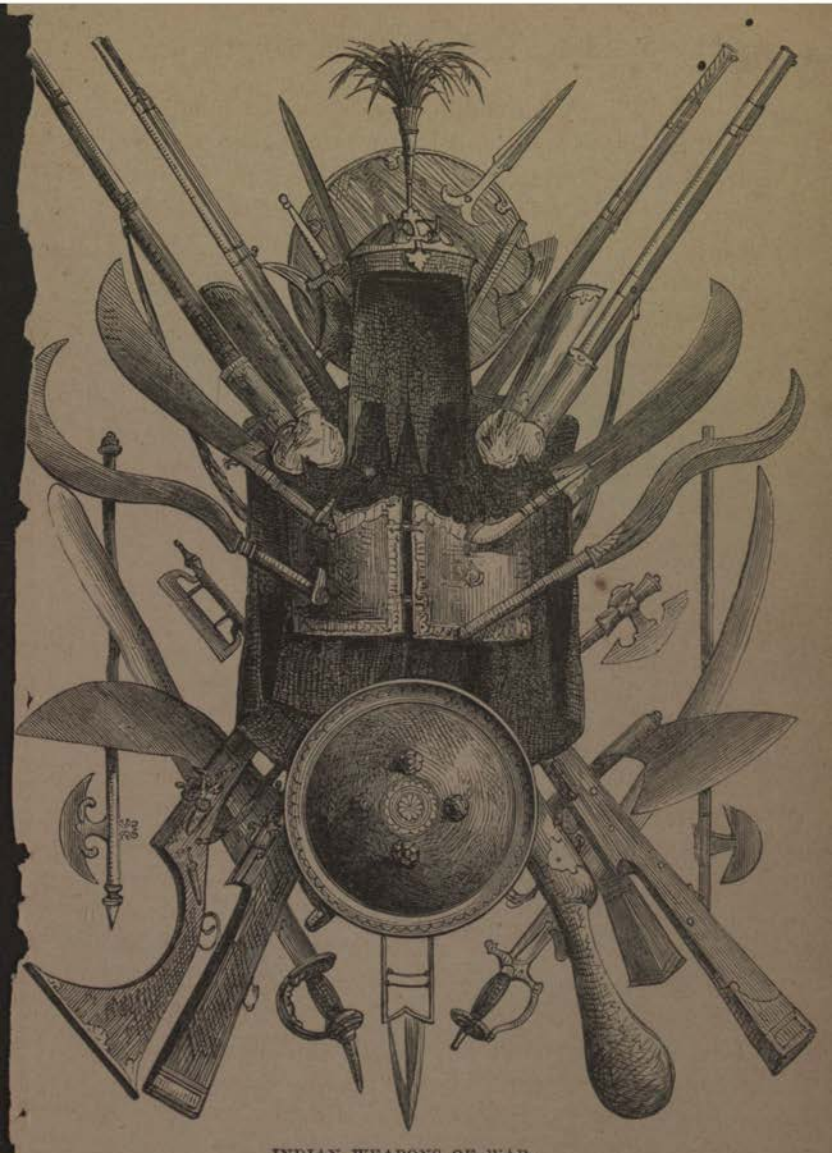
Wonderful deeds of the kind just mentioned reached the ears of the low-caste Buttoo, and he said to himself that what man had done man could do; and one day he left his home and his father and his friends, and went forth to visit Hastinapore, to pray the mighty Drona to become his instructor also. See our hero then, his journey over, in the presence of the great preceptor as he sat surrounded by the princes. And marching boldly forward, he declared, in reverent yet manly words, that hearing of the fame of Drona and his pupils, he had come to seek his guidance also in the use of the bow.

"And who art thou?" the teacher said. "My name is Buttoo," replied the youth, "a hunter's son." And then a laugh of scorn broke on his ears. The great teacher was laughing, and the princes were

laughing ; all were laughing together, to think that such a low-born boy should come into their city and presence with such a request. And with words of bitter reproach they bade him be gone, and not show his face to them again. And the lad made reverent obeisance to the preceptor, and turned with flushed cheeks yet with calm dignity away :—

> " And lo,—a single, single tear
> Dropped from his eyelash as he past ;
> 'My place, I gather, is not here :
> No matter,—what is rank or caste ?
> *In* us is honour, or disgrace,
> Not out of us,'—twas thus he mused.
> 'The question is,—not wealth or place,
> But gifts well used, or gifts abused.
> And I shall do my best to gain
> The science that man will not teach,
> For life is as a shadow vain,
> Until the utmost goal we reach
> To which the soul points.' "

Were these not brave and noble words, and who could doubt that such a youth would become famous ! And famous Buttoo did become, though not just in the way that one might have expected. From the presence of Drona and the scoffing princes the low-born but high-souled Buttoo passed into the forest. Of home he did not think for a moment, for he had resolved that he would not return thither until his name was honoured even by the great ones of the earth. In the forest he built himself a little hut in which to dwell, and near the hut he carved out for himself an image of the great teacher who had cast him off, yet whom he still reverenced.



INDIAN WEAPONS OF WAR.

And the image was so skilfully worked that any one seeing it might have thought for a moment that the teacher in his flesh was there. And when Buttoo had completed his task he knelt down before the figure, and in his zeal hailed it as his master. And from that hour he devoted himself to archery, and archery alone. Day by day he practised with his bow at marks set up by himself, and at birds and animals in the forest; and with such enthusiasm, perseverance, and patience did he labour, that in the course of time he attained unheard-of and almost undreamt-of skill. Even high-caste Arjuna could not now hope to hold his own in archery against low-born Buttoo. And thus did Buttoo show clearly to the youths of his own time, and to the youths of all time, that by *self-help* even those in a lowly station in life and placed in adverse circumstances may yet win for themselves an honourable position in the world, and the respect and admiration of their fellows.

But the story of Buttoo's life is not yet ended. There came a day when the princes from Hastinapore went into the wood, where Buttoo dwelt, on a hunting expedition. With them they took a beautiful and favourite dog; and ere the day declined this dog had found out the presence of Buttoo, and thereupon set up a most terrific barking. It may be that even the aristocratic dog, learning evil from its masters, was offended at the sight of a low-caste boy like Buttoo. Be that as it may, it barked so loudly and so fiercely that Buttoo was well-nigh distracted; and the princes just then appearing on the scene, he resolved to show his skill and to obtain quiet by shooting an arrow

from his bow into the mouth of the dog. In a moment the deed was done, and before the dog could close its mouth, six other arrows were sent with such speed that they also entered. And the tongue of the dog was fastened to its jaw: and, the story adds, though the seven arrows remained in its mouth, no pain was felt, but perfect silence was obtained.

Struck with astonishment at such marvellous shooting, the princes were speechless, and turned away with haste and dismay. All felt that Buttoo was their superior, and they were angry and envious. Arjuna, in particular, was white with rage, and hurried home to find his teacher, that he might tell him what had happened, and reproach him with breaking the promise he had once made, that no one living should excel the young prince in skill with the bow.

Drona quieted the envious and enraged Arjuna with the words, "What I said still stands good: let us go and see this wonderful youth in the forest." And soon they stood before the statue which adjoined the hut; and from the lowly dwelling-place stepped forth Buttoo, still noble-looking, still respectful, and with a smile of welcome on his face. "What means this statue?" said the teacher. And the youth explained that not being permitted to have the living person as his master, he had carved out his image, that by looking at it he might obtain inspiration.

Drona listened well pleased, for the homage was flattering, but yet he was troubled, as he thought of Buttoo's skill and his own promise to Arjuna. Meditating for some time, he saw only one way, and a very painful way, out of the difficulty. Turning to

Buttoo the teacher said, "If I am thy master, now thou hast finished thy course, give me my fee, and let all the past be dead and passed, and henceforth let us form fresh ties."

And the youth answered—

"'All that I have, O master mine,
All I shall conquer by my skill,
Gladly shall I to thee resign,
Let me but know thy gracious will.'"

"Beware! beware!" exclaimed the teacher, "rash promises often end in strife."

But Buttoo in his great generosity protested his sincerity, and his willingness to do anything :—

"'Thou art my master—ask! oh, ask!
From thee my inspiration came,
Thou canst not set too hard a task,
Nor ought refuse I free from blame.'"

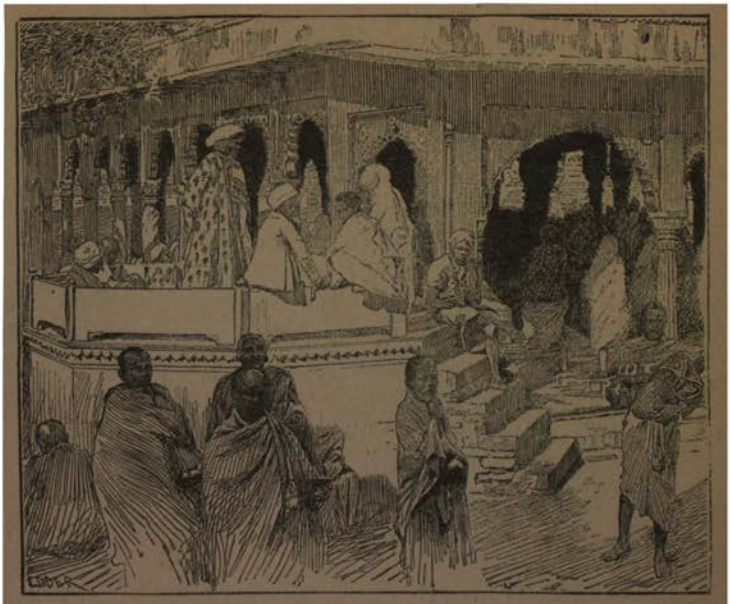
"Then listen," said Drona ; "thou seest this prince Arjuna. I promised him once that no other archer should be as great as he. Thou art already greater than he, and only by thine own act can thy skill be spoiled. Thou hast promised to give me as my fee anything I choose to ask. I ask then, O Buttoo! for thy right-hand thumb, that thumb whose light touch enabled thee to shoot so wonderfully. Canst thou now keep thy word? What sayest thou?"

Buttoo answered not by words but by deeds—

"Glanced the sharp knife one moment high,
The severed thumb was on the sod;
There was no tear in Buttoo's eye,
He left the matter with his God."

And thus the story ends. Doubtless the poor lad went back to his home and to his father and kindred, but he went not back a great archer, for "his right hand had lost its cunning." However, "greater is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." While the world lasts, O Buttoo! thou shalt be remembered:—

"Fame
Shall sound thy praise from sea to sea,
And men shall ever link thy name
With self-help, truth, and modesty."



THE GYAN KUP, BENARES.

V.

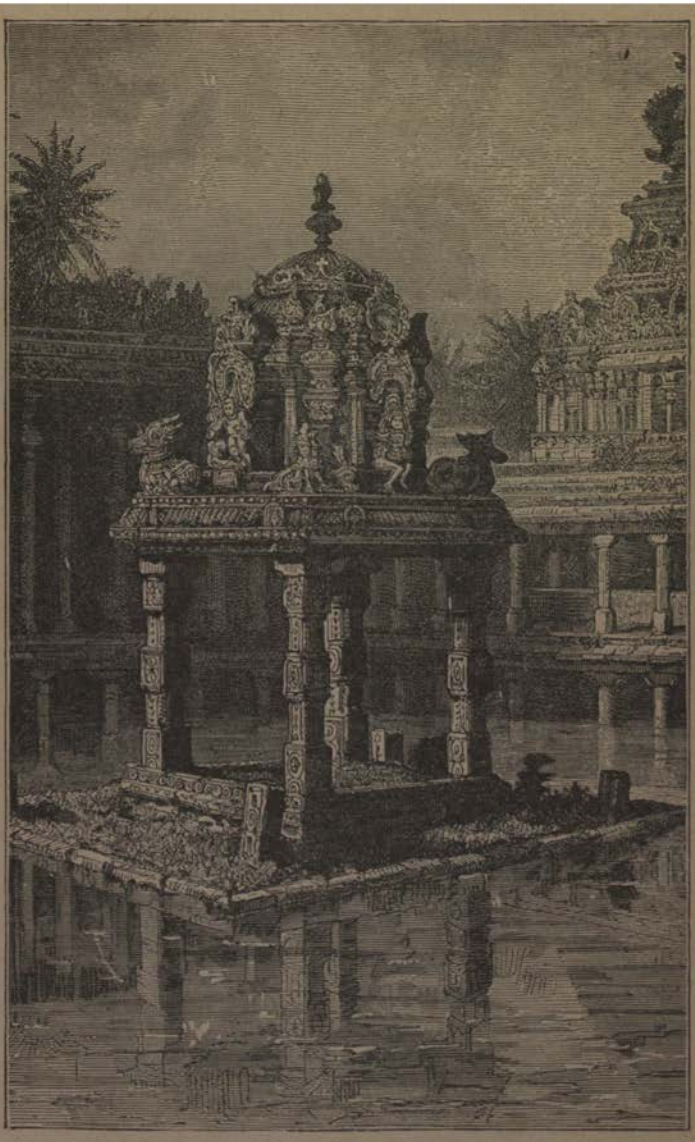
HOLY TANKS AND WELLS.

A VERY attractive feature of social life in India is the daily practice of going to the tank or well for the supply of water needed for drinking and other household purposes. Except in a few of the large cities there are no water-pipes and taps in the houses of the people. Water-supply companies are a luxury of Western lands, and are as yet almost unknown in the East. As a consequence, of course, all the water that is used in the home must be brought

from the river, if there happen to be one at hand, or from the wells or tanks that are to be found in the neighbourhood of all towns and villages; for the Hindus are a water-loving people.

It is a sight to be remembered to have stood anywhere near a tank or well in India, at any hour of the day, but more especially at the outgoings of morning and evening, and to have watched the boys and girls, the young men and maidens, and older people, either bathing in the tank or drawing water from the well. The wells are the general meeting-places of village life, where the older women gossip, and where the young ones show off their finery and chatter about acquaintances and friends, and about the delights of the previous day, or the anticipated joys of the morrow.

All foreign residents in India, or strangers who have travelled through the country, speak in glowing terms of the tanks and wells around which they saw gathered the common people of the land dressed in bright apparel, and usually with faces beaming with smiles of recognition and welcome. Mr. Minturn, in his book, describing his travels "From New York to Delhi," says: "The public wells are among the prettiest objects in the towns and villages of Hindustan. They are generally octagonal stone platforms, raised four or five feet from the ground, and approached by four flights of steps. Four stone columns over the well's mouth support cross-pieces, from which the pulley is suspended. In Bengal no pulley is used. In the North of India generally, the women draw and carry the water."



THE SACRED POOLS, TRICHINOPOLY.

Miss Cumming, in her book on India, says: "I was particularly attracted by some very fine wells in Allahabad, to which the people descend by a broad flight of steps into a world of cool shadow, so pleasant after the glaring sunlight that one feels tempted to linger a while with those groups of water-carriers who are filling their buffalo skins from the deep well far below, for the use of ordinary mortals. The higher castes, however, would be defiled by water that had been drawn in a leathern bucket, which being an animal substance is unclean; therefore each man and woman of the higher castes brings his or her own brightly polished brazen lota or jug, which by means of a long cord is lowered to the well. The whole scene is fresh and clean and pleasant."

Many of the finest wells of India are presented to a town or village by some wealthy citizen, for the use of the wayfarer and the poor. It is considered a meritorious thing so to do, and the religion of the Hindus promises untold joys hereafter to the man or woman who shall be charitable enough to provide facilities on earth for the poor to obtain copious supplies of water for social and religious requirements.

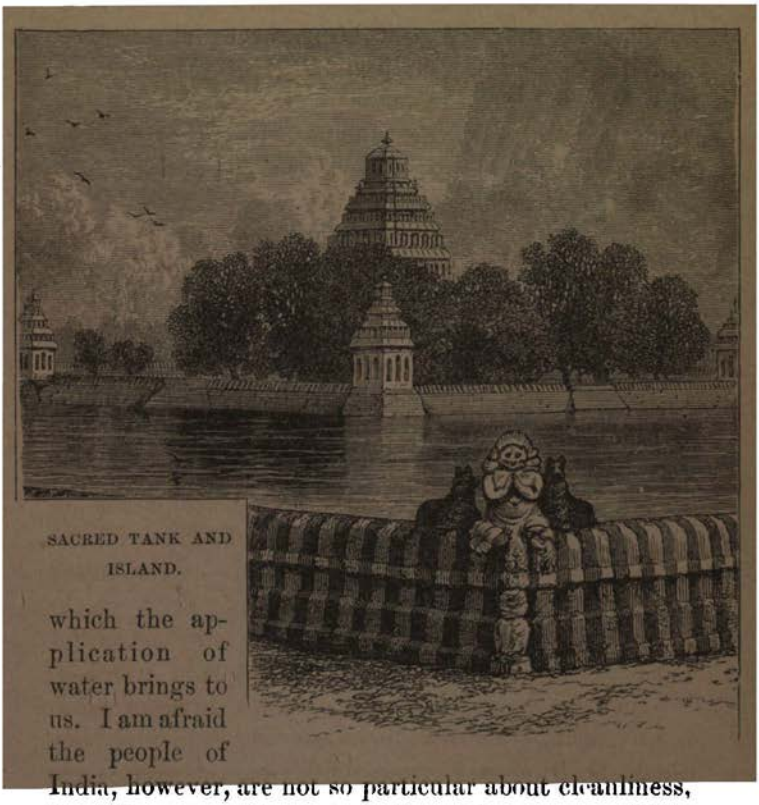
Wells in India are usually made in the same way as wells in country places in England, by digging in the ground till water is found, and then supporting the sides of the excavation with stones from the bottom to the top. Bishop Heber, however, in the Diary of his Travels in the East, tells of a very strange way of making wells that he saw in Rajputana, where the ground is very sandy and yielding. He says:

"The people build a tower of masonry of the diameter required, and twenty or thirty feet high from the surface of the ground. This they allow to stand a year or more till its masonry is rendered firm and compact by time; then they gradually undermine it, and promote its sinking into the sandy soil, which it does without any difficulty, and all together. When level with the surface, the workmen raise the wall higher, and so go on, throwing out the sand and raising the wall till they have reached the water. If they adopted our method the soil is so light that it would fall in on them before they could possibly raise the wall from the bottom; nor without the wall could they sink to any considerable depth."

Is it not a very singular thing to think of a tower that has been built above the ground, gradually sinking underground and becoming a well? Really, according to our Western way of looking at things, all seems to be turned topsyturvy in the East. I know some boys and girls who would dearly love to watch the process of making wells in Rajputana on the wall-sinking-in principle. What shouts of delight would go up from their young throats as the tower gradually disappeared underground!

Tanks and wells are used in India for special religious purposes as well as for household purposes It should be borne in mind that Hindus must worship before daring to break their morning fast, and they cannot worship until they have washed themselves and their scanty raiment. Yea, washing, either in the river, the tank, or the well, is a part of Hindu worship; it is an outward ceremonial cleansing that

must be gone through the first thing every morning. Of course we in Europe wash ourselves directly we arise from bed; but it is not binding upon us as a religious duty, as it is upon the Hindus. We wash ourselves for cleanliness, and for the health and vigour



SACRED TANK AND ISLAND.

which the application of water brings to us. I am afraid the people of India, however, are not so particular about cleanliness, for I have seen them wash themselves in very filthy water. With many of the Hindus the main idea of visiting the tank for washing purposes seems to be

just to fulfil the law which says, "He that will not wash, neither shall he eat."

While all the wells and tanks of India are regarded by the people with a considerable degree of reverence, there are some which are actually counted holy or sacred, and that are visited to obtain special blessings and favours from the gods. One of the oldest of these holy tanks is to be found in that part of India called the Punjab, or the Land of the Five Rivers. The tank is known by the name of Rinmochan, which means "debt-freeing." Now the Hindus are all too prone to buy things which they have not enough ready money to pay for, and thus they run into debt. It is a very bad practice, and a very foolish one, for it always means disaster and trouble in the long run. And the so-called "debt-freeing" tank has been originated by the wily priests of India to draw visitors and worshippers on the vain pretext that by immersion in the sacred waters the pilgrims will somehow or other be freed from the payment of all their debts.

The tank, Rinmochan, is a square of nearly five hundred yards, and the north and west banks are faced with stone steps. It is said that hundreds gather around it daily from all parts of India, and after bathing in its holy waters, and paying a fee to the priests, go back to their homes with light hearts, perfectly sure that the gods will pay their debts for them. However, in course of time their eyes are opened to the folly of their pilgrimage, for their debts are not paid, and their creditors proceed to law against them, and there is trouble upon trouble. The priests are

the only people who profit by the debt-freeing holy tank in the Land of the Five Rivers.

There is another very holy and famous tank in the Punjab, called the "Honey Tank"; though why it has received the title of Honey, no man knoweth. It is anything but a sweet place, according to all accounts. It is described as a shallow and stagnant pool, and in the hot weather the stench from it is quite overpowering. Perhaps it was a wag, disgusted with the bad odour of the water, that christened it in mockery the "Honey Tank." However, tens of thousands of people visit it, and bathe in its waters; some even have been known to drink the noxious fluid, and pretend that it was sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. The water is said to be a cure for all kinds of diseases.

Brahmin priests are of course in charge of this tank also, to fleece the credulous pilgrims out of their money. They do not always succeed, however, as the following tale will show. In 1876 a great man, a Raja or Prince, resolved to bathe in the holy and sacred "Honey Tank," and made great preparations for his journey, taking with him a considerable sum of money to give to the priests at the close of the pilgrimage. As it happened, however, the tank, owing to the intense heat that year, was quite dry. The Raja knowing nothing of the lack of water, and the priests not wishing to lose the anticipated treasure, it was resolved to draw water to supply the lack from a neighbouring well. Setting to work with feverish haste, the priests were not as careful as usual to notice what utensils were used for the conveyance of the

water; and when the work was completed, it was actually found that a workman had been carrying the precious fluid in a leathern vessel.

By this deed of course the water was polluted; but as there was no time to change the contaminated and defiled liquid for some that was fresh and pure, the priests resolved to keep their own counsel, and let the Raja bathe in it, and drink it. However, the secret leaked out somehow, and news was carried to the Prince by some busybody of what the Brahmins had been doing. We can better imagine than describe the dismay, the horror, and the anger of the Raja at the receipt of the tidings. He was beside himself with rage; but he dared do nothing to the sacred persons of the Brahmins, and so he had to content himself with returning to his own territories with the ceremony unperformed.

However, that was enough punishment for the avaricious priests, for the thought of the money they had lost was gall and wormwood to them, and it was many a long day before they recovered their spirits. Moreover, to make matters worse, the whole district got to know the joke, and the Brahmins became the laughing-stock of the community. Let us hope that the exposure helped to open the eyes of the people to the folly of the whole business of visiting the "Honey Tank" for purposes of worship.

At Delhi, the ancient capital of India, there are many sacred tanks and wells. I remember one in particular that I saw when I visited that city, called Nizam-u-din's Well, which was excavated in the year 1321. It is a reservoir of water of oblong shape, about sixty

feet long by thirty broad, and very deep. The well is said to have miraculous powers of healing. Whether useful for medicinal purposes or not, the saint's tank—for Nizam-u-din was a famous Moslem saint—was a capital place to witness some splendid diving on the part of lads and young men.

On our arrival at the tank we found half a dozen young fellows standing in a row on a high wall, from sixty to seventy feet above the surface of the water, waiting for a signal to spring into the tank. "Hab a dive, sir?" was the cry they greeted us with; by which they meant, "We will dive if you will promise us a liberal backsheesh." The money was promised, and in a moment one young fellow, joining his hands over his head, and opening wide his legs, made a leap. It seemed a risky thing to do, but the diver was absolutely fearless, and accomplished the feat in gallant style. Just before touching the water, he brought his legs sharply together, and throwing up his hands, he disappeared with a splash into the dark cold tank.

Then another youth sprang off the wall, and another, and another, until all the six were immersed in the waters of the sacred well. With considerable curiosity and admiration we looked for their reappearance, and we had not long to wait. In a few minutes the young acrobats had clambered out of the well, and stood before us dripping from head to foot, and with teeth chattering at a fearful rate. The next moment they departed well satisfied to resume their clothing.

At Allahabad also there is a holy well, which was made sacred by a Mussulman saint. This famous well is commonly called "The Well of the Magic

Carpet," and is to be found adjoining the noisy public market of the town. It is a very deep well, and from the bottom to the top its sides are built up with strong masonry. It was during the sad days of the Indian Mutiny, of which I shall speak in a later chapter, that this well became famous. It was on this wise.

One day there came to Allahabad a so-called saintly man of the Moslem religion, who aspired to be a leader in the rebellion against the English. He set up his standard in the town, and declared a holy war against "the Infidels." Very few people took any notice of the stranger, and those who did asked him mockingly what proofs of ability to lead men to victory he could show. Thereupon the saint walked calmly to the chief well of the town, threw his prayer-carpet across the mouth of the well, and then deliberately stepped on to it, and sat down cross-legged. Like wildfire the news spread through the streets of Allahabad that a saint who could work miracles had visited the city, and at that moment was sitting on the mouth of the well, without falling in. The whole populace turned out to see the wonderful sight, and being convinced that the stranger was a holy man indeed, many people joined his standard, but only to share in the destruction which came upon all who took up the sword of rebellion.

How the saint managed to deceive the people in the matter of the carpet over the mouth of the well we cannot say, but it was doubtless by some conjuring trick. However, the people of Allahabad had faith in the man, and ever afterwards referred to the event as a miraculous one; and to this day the well is

called "The Well of the Magic Carpet," and it is resorted to, and its waters drunk by thousands, with the conviction that in so doing they will obtain the blessing of the departed saint.

VISHNU. (FROM A NATIVE PICTURE.)

From Allahabad, the Moslem "City of Allah," let us go to Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, and in the latter place there are to be found innumerable wells and tanks of wonderful renown. I would refer,

however, only to two of them. First and foremost is a tank with a long name. It is called Manikarnika Kund, or the Tank of the Ear-ring. The Hindus speak of Benares as the Crown of the World, and this tank as its brightest jewel. It got its name, so the story goes, in a very remarkable way.

The god Vishnu, to oblige mankind, is said to have dug the tank, and to have filled it with perspiration from his own body. Then while he was sitting on the tank, looking with pleasure at his handiwork, another god, named Siva, appeared, and promised his friend any boon he might ask. Vishnu replied that he could not think of, or desire, any greater blessing than to enjoy the constant companionship of Siva himself. So gratified was Siva with this answer that his body shook with delight, and an ear-ring called Manikarnika dropped from his ear into the well. Thus came the well to be called "The Tank of the Ear-ring." It is a foolish story, but then nearly all Hindu stories are foolish.

So famous is Manikarnika Kund that it is said five or six hundred persons bathe in it daily, and at the time of eclipses of the sun or moon, and on other special occasions, the crowds that throng it are enormous. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims bathe in its waters yearly, and vainly imagine that by so doing all their sins are washed away. The late Rev. John Hewlett, M.A., of Benares, who has written a most interesting account of this famous well of Hindu mythology, tells how one day, when he happened to visit the tank with some English friends, a sad-looking native came up to him with clasped hands, in

a suppliant posture, entreating him to interfere on his behalf, adding that he had travelled six hundred miles to bathe in the sacred waters, but that the Brahmins would not allow him to do so.

Mr. Hewlett spoke to one of the priests who stood by, and asked why the man was denied the privilege he coveted. The angry reply was, "Because he wants to bathe in the tank without giving a suitable offering." This afforded the missionary an opportunity, which he gladly embraced, of telling the disappointed pilgrim, and the crowd that soon gathered round, of Jesus Christ, the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, through whom all could obtain the washing of regeneration without money and without price, and become holy and blessed for ever.

From the Tank of the Ear-ring it is not a long walk to another very famous well of Benares, called Gyan Kup, or the Well of Knowledge. This well is very different from Manikarnika Kund. The latter is in the form of an oblong, with steps down to the water on two sides, whereas the former is circular in shape, and altogether without steps. Gyan Kup is also a small well, being only about seven feet across; while the Tank of the Ear-ring is a large well, being twenty-two feet in length, and eight in breadth. What the Well of Knowledge lacks in length and breadth it makes up, however, in depth. It is also attractive-looking, being surrounded by a handsome, low-roofed colonnade, the stone pillars of which are in four rows, and are upwards of forty in number. This colonnade is of recent date, having been erected in 1828, by the widow of a Raja of Gwalior.

The well itself is said to be of fabulous age, and it is renowned because it is believed to contain the remains of an idol of Siva, which was taken from the Golden Temple adjoining, and thrown into the water by that bigoted Mohammedan Emperor, Aurungzebe, whose delight was to destroy the idols of his Hindu subjects.

Gyan Kup is the favourite well of the young people of India, for they believe that a draught of its waters will make them learned and wise. Therefore it is called "The Well of Knowledge." On special festival occasions Gyan Kup, like Manikarnika Kund, is literally besieged with worshippers, who have difficulty in presenting their offerings, and obtaining a little of the water; and even at ordinary times there is quite a large gathering of people.

The usual offerings that are thrown into the well as a sacrifice to the deity who is supposed to dwell below, are Ganges water, flowers, and fruits. At one time, and not very long ago, all the things thrown in reached the water, and from the compound mixture, which was of course in a constant state of putrefaction, there arose a most sickening smell. Now, however, a net is stretched across the top of the well to catch the offerings of the worshippers; and I noticed that only small flowers could drop through, and very few of those did actually fall to the water while I remained watching.

By the side of the well on a raised seat sat a Brahmin, quite a youth, and to him my attention was called, as he was evidently the master of the ceremonies for one day at least. He was an intelligent-

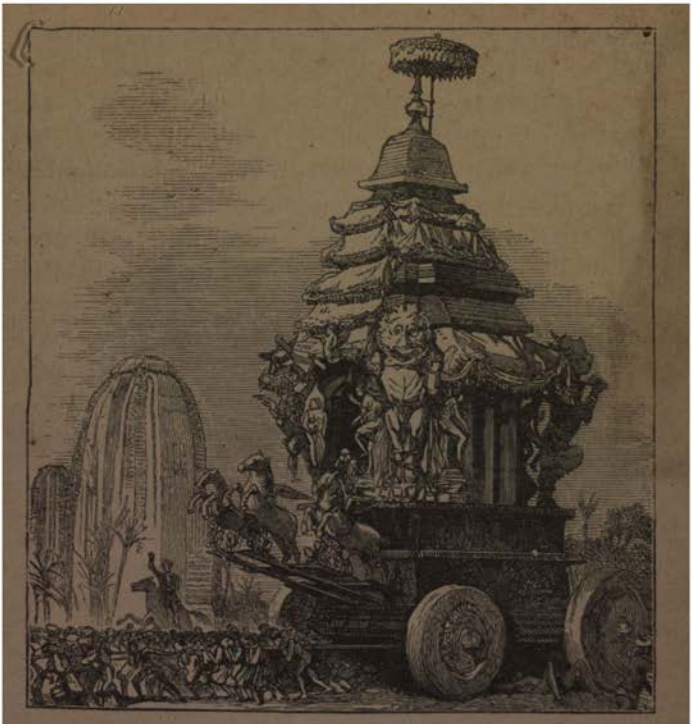
looking lad, and had a smile and a word for everybody. I should think he was not more than fifteen years of age, and yet he was attending to his duties in a methodical and business-like way which called out one's admiration. And what were his duties? Just glance at the utensils around him and you will speedily know. Behind him was a bucket with a long chain attached to it. In front of him was a cask filled with water, and in his hands was a big ladle. Watch the people after they have been to the well and thrown in their offerings, and you will see that they march round to where this young man sits in priestly state.

Worshippers of all ages, both male and female, draw near to the youth, and passing in single file hold out the right hand, which is immediately supplied with water from the big ladle. This is drunk without hesitation, whether it be clear or dirty, and the hand is held out again, and being again supplied with the holy water of the well, the head is now sprinkled; and the worshipper hugs to his heart the false assurance that he is thereby made wise unto salvation. Oh the folly of such absolution from sin! and yet the people I saw at the Well of Knowledge seemed content with it. Ere the worshipper leaves he is expected to give money—either copper, or silver, or gold—to the priest; and to the boy-priest this part of the proceedings seemed of the utmost importance. His bright eyes got brighter as his gains got larger, and as the people crowded around him he flourished his ladle with increasing alacrity and vigour.

But how sad it is to think of priests, whether boys or men, ladling out wisdom and salvation! Is not

our Christian conception of Divine truth grander and more ennobling than the Hindu notion? Our Well of Knowledge is the Holy Bible. Our only hope is in Jesus, the Water of Life, who has said, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink." If Christ sat in the flesh to-day beside Gyan Kup at Benares as He once sat on the Well of Jacob at Samaria, He would say to the Hindus as He said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Our missionaries in India need our sympathy, our prayers, and our generous help, in their laborious work of persuading the people of India to turn away their faith from holy tanks and wells, to the Sacred Person of Christ, the Word of God, who alone is able to make men wise unto salvation.



FESTIVAL OF JUGGERNAUT.

VI.

THE WORSHIP OF JUGGERNAUT.

SITUATED on the sandy shores of Orissa, washed by the wild waves of the Bay of Bengal, stands the well-known Temple of Juggernaut, containing the god who is called, by the people of India, the Lord of the World.

This Temple of Juggernaut at Puri is one of the

largest and most famous temples of the East. It is within a sacred enclosure, and is protected from prying eyes by a massive stone wall 20 feet high, 652 feet long, and 630 feet broad. There are many other temples all around, but the great pagoda of the Lord of the World stands towering over the rest. "Its conical tower rises like an elaborately carved sugar loaf, 192 feet high, black with time, and surmounted by the mystic wheel and flag of Vishnu."

The temple consists of four large chambers, opening one into the other. The first is called the Hall of Offerings, where the worshippers deposit the presents they have brought in honour of the idol. The second is called the Pillared Hall, and is devoted to the musicians and the dancing-girls who frequent the temple. The third is the Hall of Audience, in which the pilgrims assemble to gaze upon the face of the god. And the fourth is the Holy Sanctuary itself, the room in which Juggernaut sits in great state to receive his worshippers.

It should be mentioned, perhaps, at this stage, that the famous idol is never alone, but has the constant companionship of a brother and sister. All three images are nothing but huge logs of wood coarsely fashioned into human shape, but without arms or legs. The priests say, when questioned about the absence of such useful members of the body, that the Lord of the World does not need them for his purposes amongst men. Such appendages would have improved the appearance of the images, however. As it is, the mighty Juggernaut and his relatives are about as ugly, senseless-looking idols as could possibly be imagined.

UNION CHAPEL PARSONAGE, CALCUTTA.

The Author's Indian Home.

The worship of Juggernaut dates back, it would appear, nearly two thousand years, and Orissa has been the Holy Land of the Hindus from that time till the present day. Sir William Hunter says, "On the inhospitable sands of Puri, a place of swamps and inundations, the Hindu religion and Hindu superstition have stood at bay for eighteen centuries against the world. Here is the national temple whither the people flock to worship from every province of India. Here is the gate of heaven, whither thousands of pilgrims come to die, lulled to their last sleep by the roar of the eternal ocean."

Now what is there about this god Juggernaut that should lead the people of India to yearn after a sight of him with such intense solicitude? Let us get to know all we can of his history and reputed character. Juggernaut, we are told, is just Vishnu, the second person of the Hindu Trinity, in one of his earthly forms. The story goes that ages ago a good king who lived in Málwa sent out priests to the east, and to the west, and to the north, and to the south in search of Vishnu, who, it was commonly reported, had come to this earth to dwell amongst men. The priests who went to the west and to the north and to the south returned, but he who went to the east returned not.

And why not? The fact is the priest had been kept a prisoner in Orissa, in the house of a certain man named Bàsu, who was a fowler of the wilderness. Bàsu had taken a fancy to the stranger, and was determined to marry him to his daughter. For a time the priest refused his consent, but at last, pleased

with his intended wife, if not with her father, he resigned himself to his fate and married her. Now, Bàsu was the possessor of the very idol which the good king had sent the priest to find. The latter noticed that his father-in-law went every morning into the jungle to worship, taking with him fruits and flowers, but he could not tell where exactly he went, or what it was precisely that he worshipped. So one morning, prompted by curiosity, he expressed his willingness to accompany Bàsu, and the latter consented on condition that he went blindfold, which he agreed to.

After a long walk the two men reached their destination, and the eyes of the priest having been unbound he beheld Vishnu in the form of a blue stone image, propped up against a fig-tree. Presently the old man left his son-in-law alone, whereupon the Brahmin prayed to the Lord of the World and worshipped him. The legend says further: And as he poured out his heart a crow that sat rocking herself upon a branch above, fell down before the god, and suddenly taking a glorious form soared into the heavens. The Brahmin seeing how easy the path to eternal bliss appeared to be from that holy spot, climbed into the tree, and would have thrown himself down, but a voice from heaven cried, "Hold, Brahmin! First carry to thy king the good news that thou hast found the Lord of the World." At the same moment Bàsu came back with his newly-gathered fruits and flowers, and spread them out before the image. But, alas! the god came not, according to his wont, to partake of the offering. Only a voice was heard

saying, "Oh, faithful servant, I am wearied of thy jungle fruits and flowers, and crave for cooked rice and sweetmeats. No longer shalt thou see me in the form of thy blue god. Hereafter I shall be known as Juggernaut, the Lord of the World!"

After these strange events, the story says, the two men wended their way homewards, and the Brahmin was permitted to return to his king to tell the glad tidings that the Lord of the World had been found. Then the King of Málwa rejoiced exceedingly, and with a great army and an immense retinue of followers, made his way to Orissa to see Juggernaut. As he drew near the place where the idol was to be found his heart swelled within him with pride, and he cried aloud, "Who is like unto me, whom the Lord of the World has chosen to build his temple, and to teach men in this age of darkness to call upon his name?"

Such proud words displeased the idol, however, and a voice was heard from the clouds saying, "Oh, King! thou shalt indeed build my temple, but me thou shalt not behold. When the building is finished then thou shalt seek anew for thy god." And lo, when the priest led the monarch to the fig-tree, the blue idol was not to be found. It had vanished into space.

The King, obedient to the heavenly voice, we are told, built a magnificent temple at Puri, and when it was finished, sent forth Brahmins once more in every direction in the land to search for the lost idol, but years upon years passed by, and Juggernaut still was not found. At length, however, the god, when he had sufficiently humbled the proud king, appeared to him in a vision of the night, and said to him, "To-morrow,

cast thine eyes on the sea-shore, when there will arise from the water a piece of wood fifty-two inches long and eighteen inches broad. That is my true form. Take me up and keep me in hiding twenty-one days, and in whatever shape I shall then appear, place me in the temple thou hast built and worship me."

On the morrow the King went down to the sea-shore in hot haste, and there sure enough was a great block of wood which the waves had cast up. This he took home with him. It proved to be as hard as stone ; and when some of his carpenters put their chisels on the wood the iron lost its edge, and when they struck it with their mallets they only bruised their own hands. So the King had the unshapen block placed in a room of his palace, and he issued a decree that no human being should see it until the stipulated twenty-one days had expired. However, the curiosity of the Queen, who had heard the story, was aroused, and she somehow managed to open the door of the strong room ; and, lo ! when she looked in she found the great block of wood had become three blocks, and that the three blocks represented three images, carved however only from the waist upwards. One was Juggernaut, and the other two his brother and sister.

Thus the curiosity of a woman, the Hindus say, led to the Lord of the World having no proper arms, only stumps, and no legs at all. If the Queen had only restrained her inquisitiveness until the end of the twenty-one days, it is believed that Juggernaut would have appeared to the world in a form of exquisite grace and beauty, instead of in his present very

imperfect and uncouth condition. However, the King made the best of his idol-god, and had him placed along with his relatives in the holy chamber at Puri, where he is to be found at the present day, by all true believers, on payment of the customary fees to the priests. Such is the mythological origin and history of Juggernaut, the Lord of the World.

The present temple was built in the year 1198. The present idol, moreover, it might be noted, is believed to contain within it some mysterious substance, which has been variously described as the bones of Krishna, a box of quicksilver, and small pieces of the original idol. What the truth is only the priests can say, and they keep their own counsel. With regard to the title, "Lord of the World," the worshippers of Juggernaut declare that it is well deserved, because all classes and conditions of men are welcomed to Puri to look upon the face of the renowned idol. Juggernaut is a public god, and an immensely popular one; and it certainly is a remarkable fact that people of all castes visit the idol, and eat the food that is prepared in his temple, a thing that is not done in any other temple throughout the length and breadth of India.

Sir William Hunter makes the following remarkable statements on this point. He says, in his valuable book on Orissa: "The true source of Juggernaut's undying hold upon the Hindu race consists in the fact that he is the god of the people. As long as his towers rise upon the Puri sands, so long will there be in India a perpetual and visible protest of the equality of men before God. His apostles pene-

trate to every hamlet of Hindustan, preaching the sacrament of the holy food. The poor outcast learns from Juggernaut's priests that there is a city on the far eastern shore in which high and low eat together. In his own village, if the outcast man accidentally touches the clothes of a man of good caste, he has committed a crime, and his outraged superior has to wash away the pollution before he can partake of food or approach his god.

"In some parts of the country the lowest castes are not even permitted to build within the towns, and their miserable hovels cluster amid heaps of broken potsherds and dunghills on the outskirts. And throughout the southern part of the continent it used to be a law, that no men of these degraded castes might enter the village before nine in the morning or after four in the evening, lest the slanting rays of the sun should cast his shadow across the path of a Brahmin. But at Puri, in the presence of the Lord of the World, priest and peasant are equal. The rice that has once been placed before the god can never cease to be pure, or lose its reflected sanctity. The lowest may demand it from, or give it to, the highest. Its sanctity overleaps all barriers, not only of caste, but of race and hostile faiths; and a Puri priest will stand the test of receiving the food from a Christian's hand." This is truly very wonderful in a country like India, where caste feelings are strong and bitter; and thus Juggernaut may in a sense be called the Lord of the World, though he remains an idol all the same.

There is a legend, related in connection with the "holy food" and the "equality of castes" at Puri,

that is worth repeating. A certain young man, of high standing in society, it is said, puffed up with the shameful pride of caste, made a vow that he would visit Puri and see Juggernaut, but that he would eat no leavings of any mortal being. The proud young fellow drew near the sacred city, but when just about to pass within the gates he was stopped by the power of the Lord of the World and stricken with illness, so that his arms and legs fell off, and there remained of him only a miserable body which lay by the road-side. For two long months the crippled object was absolutely dependent on the charity of passers-by, but at length it chanced that a dog came that way with a mouthful of the "holy food" of Juggernaut, and let a few grains of rice fall on the ground.

The poor, humbled youth, noticing the food, managed to roll himself forward so that with his lips he might gather up the precious grain, the leavings of a dog, whose mere shadow falling on ordinary food would have defiled it. And, wondrous to relate, immediately the food had passed the young man's lips the mercy of Juggernaut was extended to him, and his health was restored, and he was suffered to enter Puri, and to approach in lowliest penitence the shrine of the Lord of the World. And ever after the youth was humble-minded and modest to a degree.

In writing of this doctrine of human brotherhood at the Temple of Puri, it is only fair to say, however, that at the present day it is in a great measure ignored by the priests, who keep out some people of the lowest castes. They have no right to do so, and thereby violate their own religious laws, but they are a

degenerate race of men and do not care. Generally speaking, admission to the temple is now refused to those who handle unclean substances, and to all who have to do with the destruction of animals, birds or fishes, and to Christians, Moslems, and the aboriginal tribes of India. Thus the one good thing about the Temple of Juggernaut—its theory of the universal brotherhood of mankind—is being gradually encroached upon, and made of none effect.

It has been already said that devotees come to worship the Lord of the World at Puri from all parts of India. While images of Juggernaut are to be found all over the country—and there is a very famous one at Serampore, not far from Calcutta—the greatest merit is obtained, so it is believed, by seeing the original idol, or what passes for the original idol, in the Black Pagoda of Orissa. So thither the people journey day and night throughout every month of the year. There is, indeed, a constant pilgrimage of Hindus to Puri ; a vaster concourse of human beings than ever journeyed on pilgrimage to Jerusalem to the tomb of Christ, or to Mecca the birthplace of Mohammed. It is said that for three hundred miles along the great Orissa road, every village has its pilgrim encampment slowly making its way to Juggernaut.

The encampments consist of from twenty to four hundred persons, and at the time of the great festivals they tread so closely on each other's heels as almost to touch each other, and a continuous train of pilgrims many miles long may often be seen on the Puri high road. They march in orderly procession, each party

under its own leader. Often nine-tenths of them are women and children. Some of the pilgrims, in all probability, have come a thousand or even fourteen hundred miles, from the very farthest extremities of the empire. In these days of railways many of the travellers journey parts of the way by train, but some cover the whole distance on foot.

Sir William Hunter says: "Those who keep to the road have spent their strength long before the holy city is reached. The sturdy women of the north brave it out, and sing songs till they drop; but the weaker females of Bengal limp piteously along with bleeding feet in silence, broken only by deep sighs and an occasional sob. The pilgrim-guide tries to keep up their spirits, and insist on their doing a full day's journey every day, in order that they may arrive in time for the festival.

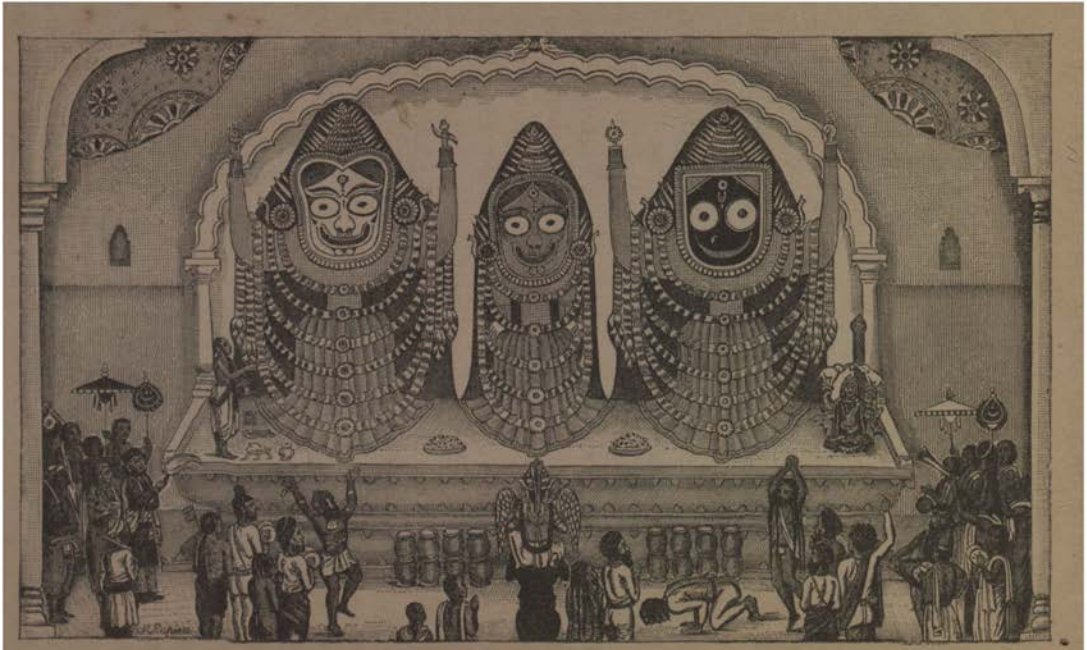
"Many a sickly girl dies upon the road; and by the time they reach Puri, the whole party have their feet bound up in rags, plastered with dirt and blood. But once within sight of the holy city the pains and miseries of the journey are forgotten. They hurry across the ancient Mahratta bridge with songs and ejaculations, and rushing towards one of the great artificial lakes plunge beneath its sacred waters in a transport of religious emotion. The dirty bundles now yield their inner treasures of spotless cotton, and the pilgrims, refreshed and robed in clean garments, proceed to the temple."

The great object of the worshippers is to *see* Juggernaut, as it is declared that a sight of the idol will destroy sin in the observer, and bring him untold

bliss in eternity. Unfortunately, however, the sanctum in which the god is kept is so dark that scarcely anything is visible within, even at midday. The pilgrims usually enter the pagoda grounds by the east gate, and are then conducted round the outside of the building once, twice, and even seven times. Then they are shown into the Dancing Hall, through which they pass into the Audience Chamber. Now they are directed to look towards the Holy Sanctuary. Obeying the command with all eagerness, a cry of disappointment arises from their lips, for they are utterly unable to see a single object.

The fact is, the glare of the sun from the buildings they perambulated just before they entered the temple has for the moment dazed their vision. The priests, however, explain the matter by saying that the effect of sin renders carnal eyes unfit to behold the divine Juggernaut. Gradually as the people continue before the sanctum and get used to the darkness, a faint appearance of the idol is noticed. There is Juggernaut indeed, with his face painted black; and there is his brother with a white face; and there also is his sister with a golden-coloured complexion. At this sight the pilgrims raise a cry of rapture, and pass out of the temple with glad and joyous hearts, apparently amply repaid for their expense and sufferings by the road. Truly a very little satisfies the heart of the Hindu worshipper!

But what of those unfortunate creatures who, owing to the great throng at special festival times, cannot stand long enough in front of the holy sanctuary for their eyes to adjust themselves to the gloom? This



IDOLS IN THE TEMPLE OF JUGGERNAUT.

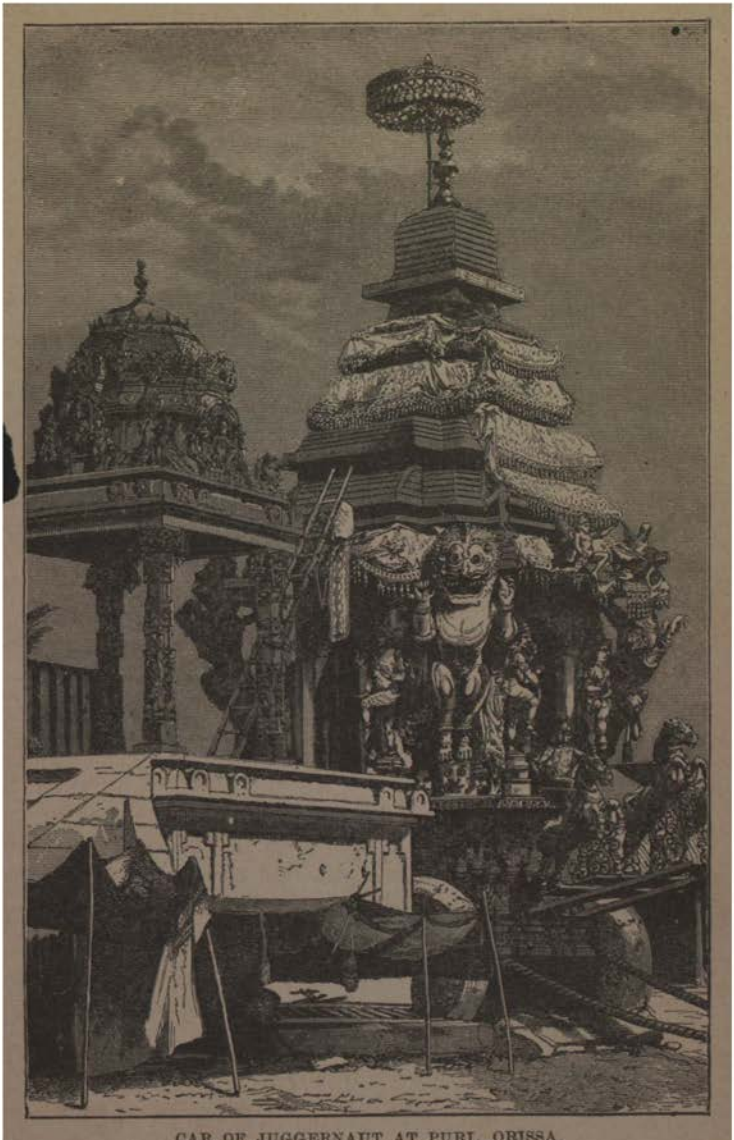
happens in the case of countless thousands. These are, from their own point of view, unfortunate indeed, and depart with cries of depair; at which, however, the hard-hearted priests only laugh, and tell them to come another year, when perhaps their vision will be sufficiently cleansed from sin to behold the face of the Lord of the World. It must be terribly painful and humiliating to have to go back home, and confess that the journey was made almost altogether in vain, that, at any rate, though they had worshipped in Juggernaut's temple, the crowning mercy had not been granted of beholding the famous and precious idol—the god himself.

Some idea of the immense popularity of Juggernaut may be gained from the statement made by a Hindu gentleman who had spent his life at Puri, that the number that flocks in and out of the holy city never falls short of fifty thousand a year, and sometimes amounts to three hundred thousand. Some visitors say that even these high figures are below the mark, and that it would be nearer the truth to say that quite a million human beings every year worship the Lord of the World in his black pagoda on the shores of the Bay of Bengal.

The revenues of the famous temple are of course enormous. The Mohammedans in past days, when supreme rulers in India, are said to have raised a sum equivalent to £100,000 per annum, merely by putting a tax on pilgrims. The British Government continued the tax, but somehow only managed to raise a little over £6000 by the unholy traffic. In 1840 the English had the good sense and the courage to

give up entirely an income derived from idolatry ; and now all the taxes and fees which pilgrims pay are imposed and received by the raja of the district and the priests of the temple. It is believed one way and another the income at present will certainly be not less than £50,000 per annum. "The richer pilgrims heap gold and silver and jewels at the feet of the god, or spread before him charters and title-deeds conveying rich lands in distant provinces. Every one, from the richest to the poorest, gives beyond his ability ; many cripple their fortunes for the rest of their lives in a frenzy of liberality ; and hundreds die on the way home from not having kept enough to support them on the journey."

The number of priests of high and low degree in charge of the temple at Puri is estimated at nearly seven hundred, and then there are the musicians and the dancing-girls in constant attendance on the idol. From a return prepared for the House of Lords some years ago, the following interesting items of information have been gathered. There are about sixty officers to dress and ornament the idol, and three hundred watchmen day and night to provide for his safety. There are twenty keepers of the wardrobe, forty servants to ornament and perfume the image, three to paint the eyebrows of the god, and three more to see that the several general officers attend to their duties. Then further there are three hundred cooks to prepare rice and sweetmeats and the like, ten persons to supply water whenever required, and ten to look after the ceremonial vessels of the temple. A servant is provided also to keep watch at the closed



CAR OF JUGGERNAUT AT PURI, ORISSA.

the next moment are straining and pulling at the cumbersome conveyances, which at length move with a heavy, creaking noise.

On one occasion, at a village near Serampore, I witnessed this extraordinary spectacle of the dragging of Juggernaut's car, and the cars of his brother and sister. Never shall I forget the sight. The road was filled with tens of thousands of lookers-on, all wild with excitement; and the poor fanatics who held the ropes were dragging the cars along with frenzied zeal. Every now and then there would be a stop, that the men might rest, I supposed; but instead of resting they took to jumping in the air, and to whirling themselves round like dancing dervishes, and shouting at the top of their breath, "Victory! victory to Juggernaut!" At length the vehicles reached their destination. All of a sudden a noise of firearms was heard—a signal from the priests—and in a moment the great ropes were thrown down, and the cars stopped in the middle of the road. Then once more the dense throng of worshippers raised a mighty cry of victory to the Lord of the World, that could be heard miles away.

In connection with the car festival there is associated, in European minds, sad tales of infatuated human beings who have thrown themselves under the wheels of Juggernaut's conveyance, and have been crushed to death. Such deeds have certainly happened, but they have not been anything like so frequent as many people have supposed; and they are not in harmony with the teaching of the priests with respect to Juggernaut, who is described as a merciful god,

desiring the good of men, and wishing harm to befall no one. Self-immolation is altogether opposed to the will of the idol, so the Hindus say; and yet it remains a fact that some worshippers have deliberately sacrificed their lives under the wheels of Juggernaut's car. This is accounted for, and probably correctly, by the statement that such suicides are for the most part cases of diseased and miserable people, utterly tired of life, and who falsely imagined that the Lord of the World would be pleased with their violent death.

In July 1826, the Rev. Mr. Lacey, a missionary in Orissa, witnessed a sad case of self-immolation in connection with the Car Festival, of which he thus wrote: "This afternoon I had an awful subject for my discourse—the body of a poor man crushed to pieces by the car of Juggernaut. The massy wheel had passed over his loins, and he presented a shocking sight to look upon. While standing by the dead body, I became quite ill with sickness, and every limb shivered with horror. The wheels of the car are made for this work of death most effectually, as the spokes project three or four inches beyond the felloe. The poor wretch had thrown himself from the front of the car, and so was a voluntary sacrifice. He seemed a respectable man, apparently a Brahmin. I felt I ought not to lose such an opportunity of witnessing against a system that produced such effects; so I took my stand over the body, and spoke with some feeling of the nature of the Hindu religion, and compared it with Christianity; and perhaps I never had a more serious congregation. Some hardened wretches standing by said, 'See, sir, the

glory of Juggernaut,' pointing to the mangled body. I concluded by rebuking them, and recommending them to look to Jesus Christ for mercy and salvation, which Juggernaut could never give."

At the present time such deeds are almost unknown, but then the British Government takes great precautions against either accidents or suicides at the famous Car Festival. I remember when I witnessed the ceremony near Serampore, that more than one European policeman was near the car on the watch, and that numbers of native police were on both sides holding long ladders, with which they kept the people away from the ponderous wheels while the car was in motion. It is doubtless due to such forethought and care on the part of a parental government, more than to a very decided change of public feeling on the matter, that we owe the present immunity from horrible deaths under the wheels of the car of the Lord of the World.

Juggernaut and his brother and sister extend their visit to the country for a fortnight, and during that time they remain by the roadside the observed of all observers. Pilgrims who failed to see the renowned god when they visited him in his temple, may now, if they have stayed for the car festival, have a splendid opportunity of making up their loss. It was really pitiful to see with what eagerness the Hindus rushed forward to get a near view of Juggernaut, that day I was present at the festival. Directly the car stopped and the ropes were thrown down there was a scramble for first places.

The men, however, were soon satisfied, and after

gazing a moment and giving donations to the priests of money and fruits, they quickly withdrew and went their way. The women lingered longer, and seemed to be more truly in earnest in their worship, and more deeply impressed by the vision of the god. And young people and even children too were there. It was pathetic to see mothers with little ones in their arms pointing the babies solemnly to Juggernaut, and teaching children a little older, whom they led by the hand, to bend their heads reverently until their foreheads touched the car. I watched many such parties come and go, and in every case the parents and children departed with beaming faces, evidently convinced that their devotions had been accepted by the great deity whom they had been privileged to see in all the glory of his holiday paint and apparel.

But I must close this chapter, which has extended to a greater length than I at first intended, by stating that after fourteen days *The Festival of the Return* takes place; and Juggernaut and his brother and sister are dragged back to Puri, and the idols are reseated on their thrones in the holy sanctuary of the black pagoda. And there they remain the great centre of attraction for millions of human beings. "The sad sea waves" are heard within the courts of the temple of Juggernaut, though not it is said in the inner chamber where the Lord of the World dwells. But sadder still are the sounds of woe that come from every corner of India after the great festivals are over, for of the thousands upon thousands of pilgrims who journey from far to see Juggernaut, thousands never see again their distant homes, or the

many ages, and dive into the literature of the Hindus. In the sacred book called Ramayana, which gives an account of the wonderful adventures of the god Rama, we read that Sita, his wife, was captured by a demon king, Ravana by name, and carried off a prisoner to Ceylon, where she was detained.

Rama, distressed on account of the loss of his beautiful Sita, planned an expedition to Ceylon to rescue her from the demon. Not feeling equal to the enterprise alone, he made friends with a powerful tribe of aborigines, scornfully called monkeys, in the south of India, and enlisted their services, which seem to have been readily given. The king of the monkeys was called Sugriva, but the real hero of the tribe was one Hanuman, who occupied the post of prime minister. Of Hanuman let me give a few particulars.

Hanuman was the son of Vāyu, the god of wind, and Vānar, a female monkey. Of his childhood many wonderful stories are told. It is said that on one occasion, seeing the sun rising, he thought it to be the fruit of a tree, and being anxious to have a taste of what promised from appearances to be rather a delicious morsel, he sprang up three hundred leagues to clutch it. We may be sure he fell back to the earth again a little wiser. On another occasion, for some boyish indiscretion, the god Indra let a thunderbolt fly at him, which caused him to fall violently on a rock. The fall shattered his cheek, and hence the name Hanuman, the "long-jawed one," was given to him.

When ten years of age this monkey-god is said to have lifted a stone of fabulous size, and to have played a curious prank with it on a number of fakirs or holy

shipping by the waters of a saints had closed their eyes ped the immense stone into shippers were surrounded a great distance before they the water's edge they again d their prayers. At that -god took out the gigantic d, so that when the holy found they were quite a distance from the tank. Thus they were tricked again and again, until they found out that Hanuman was the source of all their annoyance, when they punished him by taking from him, so the story says, half his strength.

The mischievous monkey even now, however, was stronger than the strongest human being, if we may judge by an anecdote which relates that he one day spread out his long tail right across a road along which a giant named Bheema was walking. When the giant reached the tail, he stopped, and asked the monkey courteously to remove it, for a Hindu will not stride across a person's body, or even the shadow of any one. Hanuman laughed, and told him to remove it himself. At last Bheema stooped to do so, thinking he had an easy task to perform. To his intense astonishment, however, he found that the tail was heavier than the heaviest iron, and that even when he put forth his whole strength to lift it, he could not move it a single inch. Overcome with his exertions, he acknowledged the superior powers of the monkey, and swore eternal friendship with him.

Such was the ally Rama sought to help him in war against the King of Ceylon. And so well did Hanuman conduct himself in that famous enterprise, and such was the renown he gained by his daring exploits and remarkable feats of strength, that Rama and his people looked upon the monkey-general as an incarnation of a deity, and rendered him divine honours. And ever since that time the people of India have regarded Hanuman as the prince of monkeys, as the monkey-god, and have worshipped his image in their temples.

I remember when in Allahabad seeing an immense idol-monkey which was meant to represent Hanuman. The monster image was kept in a dry tank, flat on its back, and there was a covering to keep off the rays of the sun. This idol, the priests in charge said, was made of stone, but it looked as if made of some kind of composition. Anyway, it was painted a brilliant red from head to foot. I went down to the lowest step to view the image. It was covered except the head with a sheet, and on this covering there were coins here and there, evidently the offerings of worshippers. The cloth was removed so that I might have a good view. Truly the monkey-god was a frightful-looking fellow, and the sight of him gave me the most vivid idea I ever received of the hideousness of idol-worship.

The priests, in answer to the question, "When was this idol made?" remarked that it was self-created, and appeared a number of years ago in the twinkling of an eye in the very place in which I saw it. I imagined as I turned to go away that I detected a

twinkle in the eye of one of the speakers, grave Brahmin though he appeared to be. The priests evidently thought that I was ready to believe any tale they saw fit to palm upon me.

Passing from image-monkeys to living monkeys, it has to be said that the Hindus regard them with equal or greater reverence. As the representatives in the flesh of their great forefather Hanuman, all monkeys are now considered holy. It is deemed by the Hindus a very dreadful thing to injure or even attempt to injure a monkey, for by doing so you would be casting an indignity upon the god Hanuman, who would be sure to resent and punish it.

It is a matter of history that two Englishmen lost their lives in Muttra, the sacred city of Krishna, where monkeys abound, through striking a sacred animal. The gentlemen were walking through the streets of the town, and being pestered by some monkeys that followed them, they turned and struck one of them rather a severe blow on the head. In a moment there was a commotion in the streets, for the people who had witnessed the sacrilegious act were wild with indignation and rushed at the delinquents. The two unfortunate Europeans, thoroughly alive then to the mistake they had made, defended themselves as best they could; but it was in vain they fought against the thousands of infuriated priests and pilgrims who surrounded them. In a few minutes the struggle was over. The Englishmen paid with their lives for their error.

Even the Hindus themselves dare not publicly strike a monkey, no matter what mischief the animal may

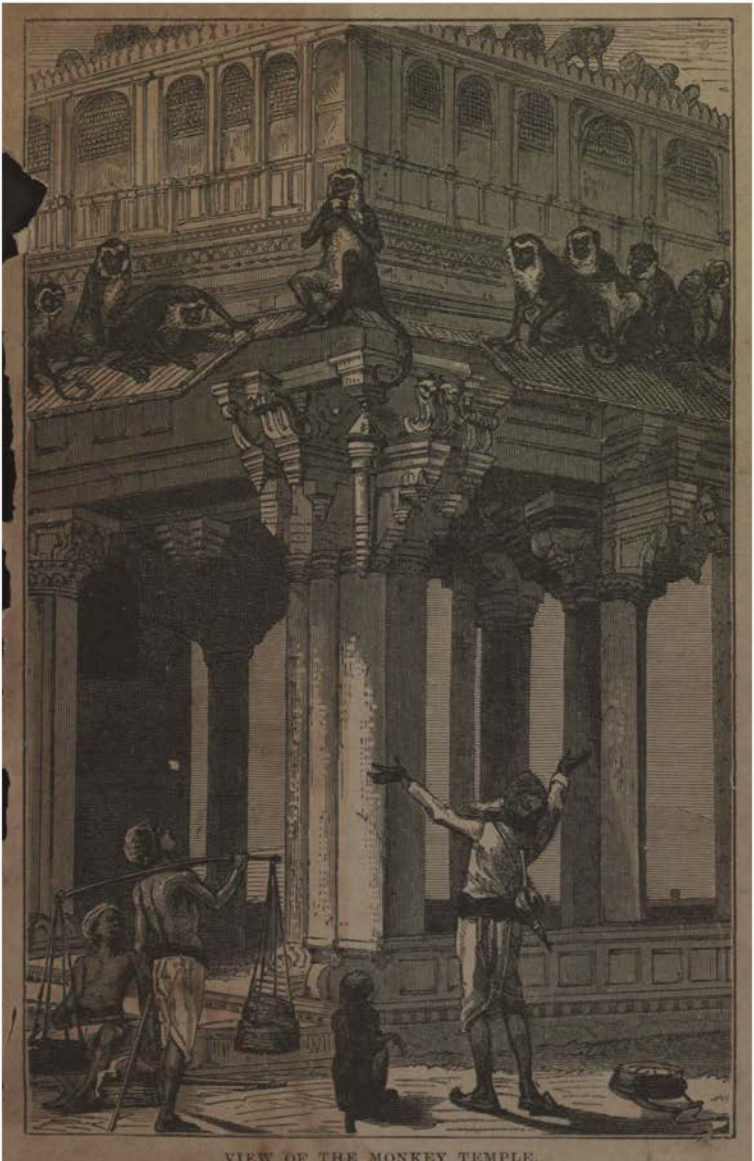
Ewan, of Benares, in his book
Stories of Native Life," tells
this point. He visited Muttra
the spot where the English-
done to death. He just mentions the
: "Near the place where the
witnessed a sight I shall never
a large male monkey and a
It was about the possession of a
goblet. The Brahmin had set it down with
in it, and as soon as he turned his back
monkey came down, put his hand in, grasped part
contents, and of course could not get his fist

The Brahmin returned, and at first tried endearing
to get it to give up the vessel, but to no
Then he tried something a little stronger,
it with the exhibition of a loaded cane.
this the monkey replied by threatening him with
teeth and armed fist. As I passed, the Brahmin
with his stick at the 'present,' and the monkey
his brass goblet high over head as if it would
the instant he dared move. Yet the Brahmin
could be abusive to men, who could rob the poor
pilgrims of their all, would not venture to touch the
hateful brute." Thus the monkey won in the contest.
Mr. Ewan tells another good story of the monkeys
He writes, "We had a school in this town
years ago, at a place near which the monkeys
to congregate in very large numbers. One
I was examining the pupils, but found it
to keep their attention. Something seemed

to be amusing them. It was
but as I had kept my sun hat
the heat, I could not see wha
ment went on increasing, till
the temptation to follow the
Looking up I saw a monkey
trellis roof like a man over a
out to the full, in a frantic
When I looked up and stopped
chattered at me as if I had be

Monkeys are said to be
each other as a rule, and are
in large numbers. In times
strong will exercise mastery
general way they are peaceably
to one another. The attac
monkey towards her offspring
become proverbial in India.
has died the mother has
closely encircled in her arms
while, and only parting with
urgent supplication of compa
the little one has been carried
a waste place, the mother has
down on the ground at no grea
with intense anxiety for hours
sign of returning life. So
troublesome monkeys have the

It is regarded as a very
monkey; and here and there
sacred animals are to be foun
priests see to their comfort.



VIEW OF THE MONKEY TEMPLE.

of these temples is the one at Benares called the Durga Kund, but more commonly "the Monkey-Temple." When I visited the spot there were thousands of the monkeys to be seen, of all ages, sizes, tempers, and peculiarities. At a signal from one of the priests a troop of the agile, mischievous creatures surrounded us, and I began to fear somewhat for our safety. However, the animals behaved themselves well, apart from a little teasing, and were rewarded with handfuls of grain.

Many visitors were there besides myself, but they were Hindus, and I was pained to see that they actually worshipped the chattering, comical creatures as living gods and goddesses. Saturday is the great day for worshipping monkeys. Birthdays are also considered propitious occasions, and the boon then asked for is length of days. Hanuman is considered immortal, and it is believed that he will add to the years of those who are devout in the worship of his living representatives upon earth.

There is a story told in Benares of a gentleman who brought a pet monkey of a rare species from the Himalayas to the plains. Such a beautiful specimen of the monkey tribe had never been seen in the sacred city, and he was the seven days' wonder of the inhabitants. At length a deputation of priests from the monkey-temple waited on the fortunate owner, craving permission to conduct the pet to the temple with all honour, as it was incumbent on them to worship it. So the monkey had a holiday granted to him, and he was carried off in triumph by the priests and a concourse of people to the sacred shrine, where

he was duly worshipped with choice offerings, and the next day was restored to his master with many thanks for the loan. Of late the number of the monkeys has so increased in Benares that they are felt to be a public nuisance. "What to do with our monkeys?" is the burning question of the day in the sacred city of the Hindus. There has been talk of exporting them, but two difficulties lie in the way—the refusal of the railway company to carry them, and the want of a place to receive them.

While in India, when I was visiting in the neighbourhood of Mirzapore, I made a journey of some miles to a temple to see a family gathering of monkeys about whom I had been told an amusing tale. In the neighbourhood of the temple, almost whenever you go, you will see a priest sitting on the ground with his legs crossed under him. There he sits very solemnly reading something, probably one of the sacred volumes in his possession, and every now and then he will take off his spectacles and replace them with great care.

On one occasion the monkeys, who had formed a circle round this venerable man, and were watching his proceedings with uncommon interest, made up their minds to clear up the mystery of the spectacles. So when the priest took off his glasses for the fourth time and held them at arm's length, one of the most daring of the little company clutched them out of his hand, and placed them deliberately across his own nose. The result seemed to please him immensely, if his grimaces and antics and cries meant anything. Probably his eyesight was failing him, and he found

out that the spectacles just suited his impaired vision. But the fun did not end there. The priest, when he recovered somewhat from his surprise, saw his spectacles going the round of the delighted company of monkeys, some of whom they fitted and suited, and some of whom they did not fit or suit. And to make the whole affair still more enjoyable, the spectacles were coolly handed back to the patient priest when curiosity had been completely satisfied; and, strange to say, they were no worse for the handling they had received and the examination they had undergone.

Monkeys and dogs seem to have a strong antipathy to each other, and it is impossible for them to meet without quarrelling. Miss Cumming tells about a magnificent hill dog that was presented to her, called Ramnee, who was as gentle as a lamb with human beings, but a perfect tartar with monkeys. She writes: "This antipathy to the monkey-tribe came near to causing me trouble on our return to the plains, for as we neared the Nerbudda river, he suddenly espied a great encampment of devotees accompanied by a regiment of monkeys. He was sitting beside me in an open dak-gharry, and ere I could possibly check him he sprang out and made for them. In an instant the whole camp was routed, and men and monkeys put to flight. The general confusion was diverting; but I was heartily glad when, tardily obeying my call, the great, big, gentle puppy returned, like a gentleman, to his seat in the carriage.

"Then the obnoxious-looking company plucked up courage to approach and claim backsheesh for their

insulted monkeys, when happily it occurred to me to turn the tables and claim backsheesh for my beautiful dog, who was sitting gravely at my side. Whether they were dumfounded by the exquisite absurdity of the demand, or simply considered that a white woman who would sit beside a dog was altogether impracticable, I cannot say, but they laughed and departed. That was poor Ramnee's last scamper in India."

A friend of mine, the Rev. W. G. Wilkins, late of Calcutta, had an encounter on one occasion with monkeys when he had a little dog with him. He relates the adventure in his interesting book, "Daily Life and Work in India." He writes: "I once received rather too much attention from a number of these four-handed animals. Having with me a little dog that evidently had not been often in the presence of monkeys, and who expressed his surprise at their appearance in a manner that irritated them, about twenty of them made an attack upon the little terrier. I knew that if once they caught him he would be carried to a tree and there torn to pieces; and as I had nothing but an umbrella to defend myself with, the odds were rather against me for a time. I confess I was rather annoyed to see the villagers standing as mere spectators of the game, evidently wishing to see fair play, for not one of them raised a finger to help me. With my open umbrella I managed to shelter the dog, whilst I marched backwards as quickly as possible, until I was near enough to call to my companions for help. I have no wish for another encounter with monkeys."

I have heard of another terrier named Fury, belonging to Lady Barker, which had no gallant defender in the hour of need, and which consequently came to an untimely end through its hatred of monkeys. Simla, the pleasant hill-station of the Imperial Government, was the scene of the catastrophe. Miss Cumming tells the story. In Simla there is a hill named Jakko, the woods on which are infested with monkeys, both the common brown ones, and the great big grey ones with black face and paws, and fringe of white hair round the forehead.

From Jakko it appears the monkeys were in the habit of wandering to the different houses in the neighbourhood intent on "picking and stealing," and in the course of their wanderings they often came across the little terrier, which never lost a chance of barking at them and frightening them off the premises. The disappointed monkeys bore the matter in mind, and bided their time for a terrible revenge. One day, as little Fury was accompanying his mistress through a dark thicket of rhododendrons, she saw the skinny arm of a monkey suddenly dart out from amid the scarlet blossoms, and quick as thought the poor terrier was seized by his long, silky hair, and in a second had disappeared in the thicket. Vain were all attempts at rescue; vainly and piteously the doggie yelped and howled, while a shaking of the branches and sound of scuffling were all that betrayed his unwilling ascent to the top of a high tree, where a monkey-jury had assembled to try the criminal. Once there his unhappy mistress beheld her little favourite passed from one to another, that each in turn might have

the satisfaction of pinching, and tweaking, and pulling out his hair till his particular grudge was revenged. Then, when all were tired of this amusement, they took him to the extreme end of a branch, and dropped him down a precipice. And so ended poor Fury's quarrel with the monkeys!

Lady Barker had another troublesome experience with the monkeys on the occasion of the first dinner-party she gave in Simla. "Being anxious to have an unusually pretty table, she had herself expended much care and trouble in its adornment *à la Russe*; and having just received from Europe certain dainty china figures and ornamental dishes, she had arranged such a show of sweetmeats, flowers, and fruit as should have filled all beholders with admiration. When dressing-time came, she charged her servants on no account to leave the room till her return; but hardly was her back turned, when the temptation of hubble-bubble prevailed, and they slipped out for a quiet smoke, quite forgetting the open window, and the great tree just outside, where sat certain watchful monkeys vastly interested in the proceedings.

"Judge of the feelings of the hostess when, coming down to receive her guests, she just looked into the dining-room to make sure that her work was perfect, and there found a busy company of monkeys hard at work, grinning and jabbering, their cheeks and arms crammed with expensive sweetmeats, while the table presented a scene of frightful devastation—broken glass and china, fair linen soiled—everything tossed about in hopeless confusion! From this wreck she had to turn aside, and try to look pleasant and quite

at ease while entertaining the hungry guests, who had to wait patiently till something like order could be restored, and a dinner served shorn of all frivolous adornments."

The temerity and audacity of monkeys is really something wonderful. Monsieur Henri Mouhot, the lamented French naturalist who fell a victim to fever in the wilds of Indo-China, relates a remarkable story in the first volume of his "Travels," of monkeys daring even to tease that dangerous creature the crocodile. The writer says: "Close to the bank lies the crocodile, his body in the water, and only his capacious mouth above the surface, ready to seize anything that may come within reach. A troop of apes catch sight of him, seem to consult together, approach little by little, and commence their frolics, by turns actors and spectators. One of the most active or most impudent jumps from branch to branch till within a respectful distance of the crocodile, when hanging by one claw, and with the dexterity peculiar to these animals, he advances and retires, now giving his enemy a blow with his paw, at another time only pretending to do so. The other apes, enjoying the fun, evidently wish to take part in it; but the other branches being too high, they form a sort of chain by laying hold of each other's paws, and thus swing backwards and forwards, while any one of them who comes within reach of the crocodile torments him to the best of his ability. Sometimes the terrible jaws suddenly close, but not upon the audacious ape, who just escapes; then there are cries of exultation from the tormentors, who gambol about joyfully. Occasionally, however, the claw is

entrapped, and the victim dragged with the rapidity of lightning beneath the water, when the whole troop disperse, groaning and shrieking. The misadventure does not, however, prevent their recommencing the game a few days afterwards."

In the "Statesman and Friend of India," a still more remarkable anecdote appeared some time back of an adventure a monkey had with a tiger. It appears that the village of Mahabpore, in the district of Rajshahji, was greatly troubled by a man-eating tiger, which had taken up its quarters in a jungle hard by. The inhabitants did their best to destroy or drive away the brute, but without avail. At last a monkey came to the rescue. The tale runs that when the tiger was lying down in a shady place, a monkey, espying it, took it into its head to poke the savage animal with a stick, and seemed to relish the joke very much. And whenever the tiger tried to attack its malicious assailant the latter sprang up a tree out of the way.

Thus the fun went on at intervals for a few days, when the monkey thought a ride would be a pleasant variety, and in a moment placed itself on the back of the tiger and seized its ears with its fore paws, while it twisted its hind paws under its body. The insulted and enraged animal needed neither spur nor whip, but at once began to race across the country with terrific leaps and bounds, the monkey holding on bravely all the time. In sheer disgust and despair the tiger at last dashed towards the village as if to supplicate the inhabitants to rid it of its tormentor. The people of course refused to interfere; and so the distressed animal sought again the seclusion of the jungle, and

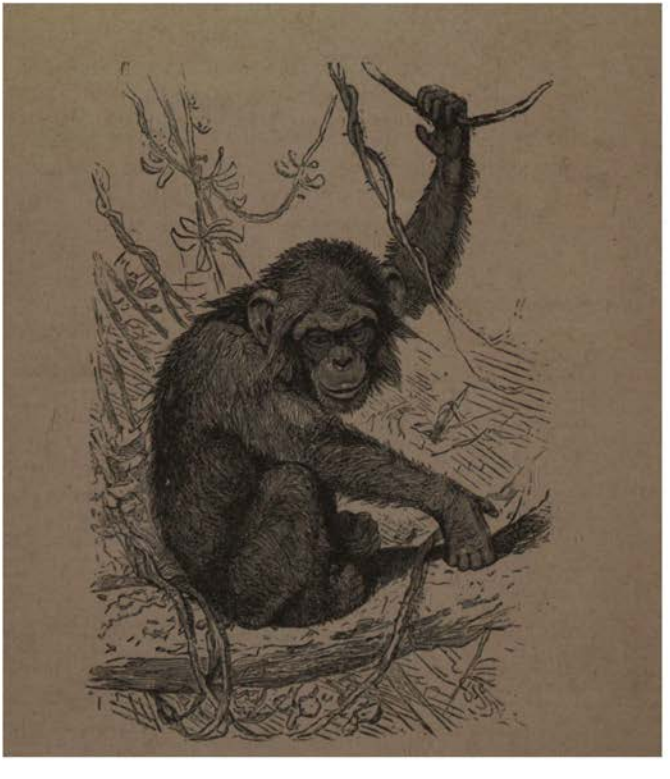
there, when it was thoroughly knocked up, the monkey took advantage of an overhanging branch, and immediately climbed to the top of a tree. The next day the tiger left the district, and was at last killed in a neighbouring village. Thus did a monkey do a good turn to human beings.

There is a famous village in Bengal called Goopteeparah, which is noted for its pundits, or learned men, and its monkeys. This curious double notoriety has led to much satire, and it is now a common saying in India to ask whether a man comes from Goopteeparah, when the speaker means to insinuate that he is nothing better than a monkey. It was from this celebrated village that Raja Krishna Chunder Roy procured some monkeys, which he took to Krishnugger, and there caused to be married, with all the usual formalities, as if they had been human beings. The expenses of the nuptials came to a small fortune.

Some years ago the Raja of Nuddea did the same mad trick. He is said to have spent one hundred thousand rupees in marrying two monkeys. In the procession were seen elephants, camels, horses richly caparisoned, palanquins, lamps and torches. The male monkey was fastened in a fine carriage, having a crown upon his head, with men by his side to fan him. Then followed musicians and dancing-girls in carriages, and a great concourse of people. For twelve days the rejoicings were continued in the palace and in the town. All Nuddea seemed to have gone crazy over the extraordinary event. At the close of the ceremonies the bride and bridegroom were given their liberty, but they remained in the neighbourhood, and

their descendants are there to this day. Indeed, Nuddea is now overrun with the troublesome creatures.

Nothing more, I am sure, is needed to show the utter folly of the Hindus with regard to the so-called Sacred Monkeys of the East. An intellectual race has fallen low indeed when it can worship such a silly, comical, and mischievous animal as a monkey!



THE KRISHNA AVATARA. (FROM A NATIVE PICTURE.)

VIII.

THE STORY OF KRISHNA.

KRISHNA, or to give him his full name, Shree Krishnu Chund, is one of the most popular of the gods of India, and is the special favourite of the women and children of India. The story of the life of this god is most curious and interesting, and reminds us in some respects of the life of our Lord

Jesus Christ. The very name Krishna, as pronounced in the East, suggests to us the name of our Saviour. But my young readers will see, as they peruse this chapter, that Krishna was a poor character when placed in contrast with Christ; for while our Lord appealed to the nobler side of human nature, Krishna appealed to the baser.

A Zenana Missionary in Calcutta, in a report of her work, once said: "There is a strong belief among Hindu women that our Christ and their Krishna are one and the same person. This opinion, while it is perhaps the means of gaining us a hearing, is to my mind one of the greatest stumbling-blocks, for it is extremely difficult for them to see or acknowledge the difference between Christ's character and that of Krishna: that the one was pure, self-denying, and loving; the other licentious, self-pleasing, and loving only in a lower and bad sense."

But now to give some details of the life of this popular god. Krishna, it is said, was born at Muttra, a city in the neighbourhood of Agra in Northern India. He is represented to have been an incarnation of Vishnu, the second person of the Hindu Trinity —not a complete incarnation, but "a portion of a portion" of the divine essence of Vishnu, the preserver of all created things. The first appearance of Krishna in this world is fabled to have been on this wise: At midnight on a Wednesday he was born, and appeared at once before his father and mother "the colour of a cloud, with a face like the moon, and with eyes like a water-lily." He had on his head a crown of gold, and round his neck was hung a necklace

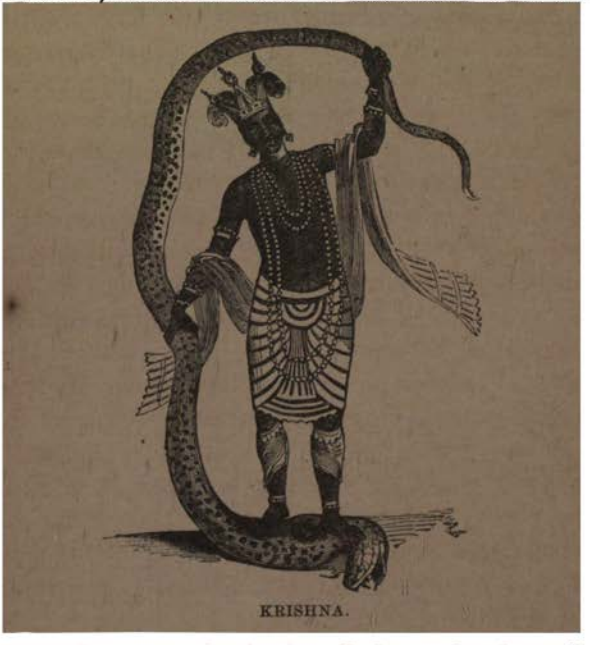
composed of jewels, and—would you believe it?—round his body there was a yellow vest.

What a curious little fellow this new-born babe would look, being unlike, I am sure, any baby that you or I have yet been privileged to see. This wonderful appearance of the boy was all illusory, however, for, as the story tells us, no sooner had his parents shouted out at the sight of him, "Great is our good fortune," than he became like other children, and began to cry in a hearty and vigorous fashion. Just as we are told in the Bible that Herod sought to destroy the child Jesus, so the Hindus in their sacred scriptures say that a wicked king or demon, called Kansa, sought to slay the babe Krishna. But Prince Basoodeo, the father of Krishna, fled by night with the child to carry him to a place of safety.

The story relates how that Krishna was placed in a basket and carried out into the darkness on his father's head. The night was wild, the rain came down in torrents, the winds blew a hurricane, and the beasts of the field roared with terror; but the new-born babe was as happy as possible, and crowed with delight. At length the river Jumna, which flows by Muttra, was reached, and the anxious and distressed father paused in dismay, for there seemed no possible way of crossing the swollen stream. Plunging in, however, he resolved to essay the task; but the depth of the river increased as he advanced, and soon the water reached his mouth. It seemed as if father and child must perish, but in a most unexpected way deliverance was wrought. The babe in the basket, the Hindus say, worked a miracle. Seeing the danger,

he stretched out a chubby little foot and touched the water; when lo, the river became shallow, and the other side was speedily reached in safety!

Through the raging storm Basoodeo pressed on with his precious burden until he reached the village of Gokool, where he found for the babe a home in the



KRISHNA.

house of a poor shepherd called Nund, whose little daughter, born the same evening, was taken away in exchange. Thus Krishna was delivered from the power of the wicked king. What became of the prince and princess, the father and mother of Krishna, we are not told—they drop out of the story altogether; and Krishna, for some years at any rate, was led to

think that his foster-parents Nund and Jasodha, the poor peasants, were his real parents. With these lowly but kind-hearted people, who treated him with much affection, the child henceforward passed his days.

And very happy the days of Krishna's childhood and youth seem to have been. He had a foster-brother named Bulram, who loved him dearly, and was his inseparable companion as they both grew in years. The two boys are represented as being of a very merry and somewhat mischievous disposition. One favourite pastime of these youngsters was to lay hold of cows' tails and hang on, while the animals ran hither and thither, evidently enjoying the fun as much as their little masters. But while we may smile at such escapades of youth, we have quite different feelings when we are told in the Hindu writings that Krishna developed into a very clever thief. Is it not strange that any people can worship a thief? But the Hindus, I am afraid, think that it does not matter what their gods do. Divinity seems to be regarded as an excuse for any wickedness. Though Krishna is generally acknowledged to have been an immoral character, yet he is almost universally adored and loved in India.

And, not content with being a thief himself, we are told that Krishna sought to train his companion Bulram and his other playmates in the same craft. There is a story told about his taking a number of cowherds' children to a place called Bruj, and encouraging them to steal butter. They searched for this tempting article of diet in houses which were left for a few

hours by their owners, and stole all they found. They also carried away the milk pails belonging to people they found asleep in their houses.

One day, however, Krishna was caught in the very act of thieving, and taken before his foster-mother, who, instead of scolding him, or punishing him, or pointing out to him the sinfulness of his conduct, simply said, "Son, do not go to any one's house; whatever you wish to eat, eat at home." Upon this, Krishna told a lie to cover his theft. Let me quote the very words of the Hindu book from which I have learned these things. Creeping up to his foster-mother, the boy said in whining tones, "Do not, mother, place any reliance on what they say. These false shepherdesses have spoken falsely, and have come roaring in pursuit of me. Sometimes they make me lay hold of milk-pails and calves; sometimes they make me perform the drudgery of their houses, and having placed me at the door to watch, they go about their business, and then come and tell you stories." Thus the youth very meanly excused himself.

Even in his own house Krishna gave trouble at times, for he was far from being an obedient boy. Take one story as an example. It was a special churning day, and Jasodha was very busy. But right in the middle of her churning, Krishna, who had been asleep, must needs awake, and call out crossly for something to eat. "Mother! mother!" he shouted, "how often have I to call you, and you will not attend to me?" Not satisfied with the promise that he would receive something to eat directly, the peevish boy

grumbled and threatened mischief. Before his foster-mother was aware of his purpose, he had seized the churn-staff from a large dish, and putting both his hands in had taken out the butter, and began throwing it about, and besmearing his body with it. Thereupon Jasodha, hoping to pacify him, stopped her work and said, "Come along with me, and I will give you food, you naughty boy!" But the perverse young man was not to be so easily quieted down, for he answered, "I will not take it now: why did you not give it me at first?" At length with coaxing and kissing he was prevailed upon to eat, and the wearied woman went back to her churning.

Jasodha had scarcely resumed her occupation, however, when Master Krishna threw over and smashed some pottery, and ran into the yard with a dish of butter in his hand to divide amongst his companions. Captured and led back to the house, the naughty lad was told that he must submit to being tied to the wooden mortar, so that he might be kept out of mischief. He agreed; but every string with which his foster-mother sought to secure him proved on trial to be too short, for, according to the story, the young prince by his supernatural powers shortened them. At length, however, perceiving that Jasodha was on the point of bursting into tears, the exasperating youth opposed no longer, and suffered himself to be tied up, and was on his best behaviour for the rest of the day.

When Krishna was a little older, he was permitted by his foster-parents to go out with other boys to graze the cattle at some distance from home. On one

such expedition, a curious and comical event is reported to have happened. The tale goes that while Krishna was tending the cattle out in the open fields, his old enemy, Kansa, sent a demon in the form of a big crane to gobble the lad up. Krishna, it appears, knew well enough what the crane was after; and when he saw it approaching he assumed an attitude of indifference, and without a struggle allowed himself to be seized by the enormous bill, and swallowed wholesale.

From the inside of the crane, Krishna gathered from the loud screams he heard that his companions were terribly upset with what had happened. "Alas, alas!" they cried; "let us go and tell his mother!" Ere they could start, however, the young prince or god carried out a little scheme he had been revolving in his mind. All of a sudden he made himself hot, and he grew hotter and hotter, until the crane became uncomfortable; and then he grew hotter still until the bird could bear it no longer, and ejected him from its mouth. Once again at liberty Krishna turned on the disguised demon, and seizing the beak of the crane, pressed the bird under his feet, and tore it to pieces, thus inflicting death on his enemy. Collecting the calves, the victorious youngster then returned home with his companions, laughing and playing.

But a still more wonderful tale is told of Krishna and his friends, the cowherds' children. It is said that one day when they were all out in the fields together, they allowed the cattle to stray a little while during the dinner hour. The god Brahma, noticing from heaven their carelessness, collected and

took away the calves as a punishment. The children, knowing nothing of this mishap, went gaily on with their repast, until quite suddenly one of them said to Krishna, "We are sitting here at our ease and eating; who knows where the calves may have strayed?" Whereupon Krishna jumped up, and exclaimed, "Do you all remain feasting, let no one be anxious; I will collect the calves and bring them here." And away the lad went in his search for the animals, but of course found them not. Then it was revealed to him that the god Brahma had spirited them away.

However, Krishna, the legend says, was equal to the occasion, for, using his divine powers he made other calves, exactly like the lost ones, and drove them before him. Imagine his dismay when, on his return, he found that Brahma had meanwhile abstracted the children. But Krishna, not to be outdone in cleverness, created other children, exactly like those that had been taken away. And the newly-created cattle and children went to their homes, and no one discovered the secret.

And where, meanwhile, were the original children and cattle? Brahma had shut them up in a mountain cave, and blocked up the entrance with a stone, intending only to keep them his prisoners for a day or two. However, the god fell into a state of forgetfulness regarding the circumstance, for the space of twelve months, but then recollecting what he had done he said to himself, "One of my moments has not passed, but a year of mortals has elapsed; I will go and see what has been the state of things in Bruj

without the cowherds' children and the calves." Thinking thus Brahma rose, and went to the cave, and having raised the stone saw the children and the calves were fast asleep. Leaving them there, the god passed on to Bruj, and to his intense astonishment found Krishna and the children playing in the street, while the calves were in the stalls. Then was it revealed to Brahma that it was the miraculous power of Krishna that had caused the illusion, whereupon he bowed to the superior wisdom and greatness of the shepherd-god, and worshipped him. The children and the calves were of course released from the cave.

As Krishna grew in years and became a young man, we are informed that he was a general favourite amongst the fair sex of the district. Many a strange story is told of his escapades with the pretty milkmaids of Muttra and Brindaban. The chief delight of the forward youth was to watch when the girls went to bathe in the Jamna, for then he would steal their clothes, and hang them all over the branches of a great tree, while he sat on a convenient bough, calmly waiting for the damsels to approach to supplicate for their garments. When I was on a visit to Muttra, the identical tree was pointed out to me. I noticed that the branches were literally covered with many-coloured rags; and when I asked the meaning of such a strange display, the priests, who were in attendance, told me, that the pieces of cloth were affixed to the tree as votive offerings by pilgrims from all parts of India, in memory of the merry deeds of the god Krishna in the days of old. Thus you see

the people of India are proud of actions which we think unseemly and wrong.

Krishna sometimes, however, was helpful to those maidens of Brindaban, for there was pointed out to me near the bathing-ghaut, a spot where a terrible conflict took place between the young god and a poisonous serpent of monstrous size and strength, which had been a terror to the bathers. Krishna, after an awful struggle, succeeded in obtaining the mastery over the reptile, and thus earned the thanks of all the country side for ridding the river banks of such an enemy.

I have in my collection of Indian curiosities an idol which represents Krishna as a young and handsome lad, joyful and triumphant, holding up a great serpent, whose head he has crushed beneath his feet. Speaking of images of Krishna, I might say that he is represented in many forms, the most popular being those which picture him as a babe in his mother's arms; as a boy resting on one knee with his right hand extended begging for sweetmeats; as a youth playing a flute or standing on the head of a serpent, and as a man fully armed for battle.

No Indian god seems to have so taken the fancy of the common people as Krishna. The women and children are never tired of talking of his strange actions and marvellous exploits, and they sing his praises all the year round. They call him the pleasant, the cheerful, the merry god, their darling, and seem to see nothing wrong in his character or life.

The miracles which Krishna is said to have wrought

are legion. In addition to those I have related I might mention that the Hindus assert that at the sound of Krishna's flute, stones and trees became animated, and the wild beasts of the field became as tame as turtle-doves. It is said also that he cured many sick people of their diseases by a word. And as a crowning proof of his mighty power, it is declared that on one occasion when the god Indra was angry with the people of Gokul, and tried to destroy them with torrents of rain, Krishna saved their lives by holding a great mountain over their village, balanced on his little finger, just as easily as any ordinary person could have held an umbrella.

There is no need to follow Krishna very closely through the remainder of his eventful history. When he became a man and had gathered round him a number of followers he attacked Kansa, the wicked King of Muttra, who had persecuted his parents, and destroyed him. Thus he became famous as a soldier and a warrior, and his services were in request in every part of India. Finally, he took part in the great wars between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, fighting on the side of the latter, who were victors in the long struggle. It is said that Krishna, who thus survived many enemies and innumerable dangers on fields of battle, was at length accidentally slain while resting in a forest against a tree, by a hunter who mistook him for a tree. If the story be true it was an untimely end to which to come. His foster-brother and life-long companion Bulram, it is said, also perished in the same forest from exhaustion, so that in their death the two friends were not divided.

TEMPLE OF KRISHNA, NEPAUL.

Now who can say how much of this strange story of Krishna's life and doings is truth, and how much is fiction? It almost seems as if somebody of this name did once live in India, and passed through very wonderful experiences, especially in the days of youth and early manhood. To make a god of such a man, and to exaggerate his deeds, would not be unlike the impressible and imaginative people of India.

Some students of Indian history think, however, that the whole tale of Krishna's life is a mere invention, probably founded on imperfect accounts of the life of Christ, which early Christian emigrants would carry to India from Palestine. It really does not matter much which view we hold. Krishna of the Hindus when contrasted with Christ cuts a sorry figure; and this is the point I want my young readers specially to notice. Think of the disobedience of Krishna to his parents; think of the immoral character of the god—of his thievish propensities, and impure actions; think of the silly and childish miracles with which he is credited; think of his days passed in strife and bloodshed. And thinking of these things remember that Christ—God manifest in the flesh—was subject to His parents in all reverence and love; that He grew up an innocent, dutiful child; that as a man He was truthful, and candid, and holy in all His ways; that He was of a peaceful disposition; that He exhorted His friends, neighbours, and fellow-countrymen to love God their heavenly Father, and also to love one another; and that He went about daily doing good to friends and enemies alike, until, in the fulness of time, He died upon the

Cross, a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Thus of Christ, but not of Krishna, we can say—

> "And so the Word had breath, and wrought,
> With human hands, the creed of creeds,
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought."

The anniversary of Krishna's birth is kept in India on the eighth Sravana, which occurs either in July or August. On that day images of the infant Krishna are adorned with sacred leaves, and the idol is fervently worshipped. Then, on the festival called the Huli, the great saturnalia of the vernal equinox in India, Krishna is worshipped with special honours, which too often degenerate into midnight orgies.

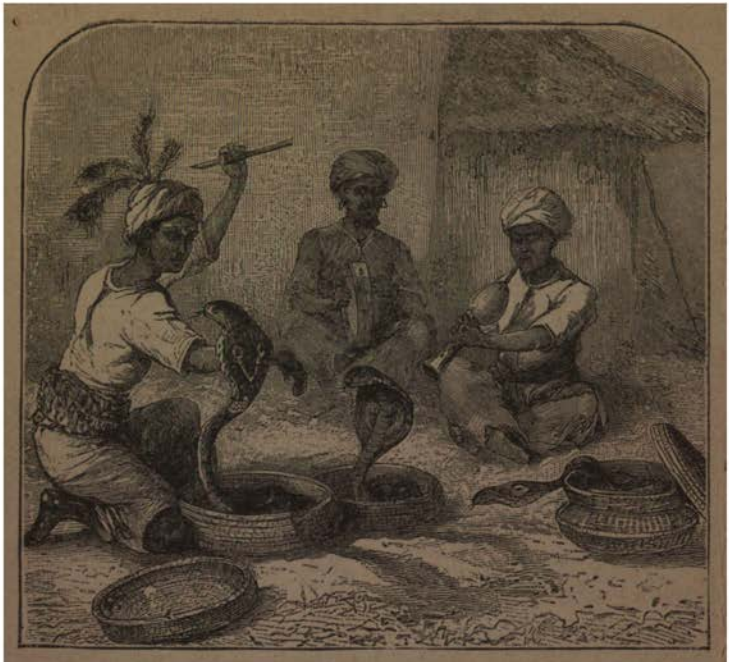
Worshippers of Krishna are assured that in this life they will obtain innumerable pleasures, and in the world to come such joys as the heart of man never conceived. The heaven promised to all who call Krishna their god is a vast golden city, containing a multitude of beautifully furnished palaces, mansions, and halls. "Rivers of crystal flow through the city, and broad, beautiful lakes are overshadowed by fair, fruit-bearing trees. These lakes are covered with water-lilies, red, blue, and white, each blossom having a thousand petals; and on the most beautiful of all these calm lakes floats a throne, glorious as the sun, whereon Krishna the beautiful reposes."

And, sad to say, it is not considered necessary, according to Hindu teaching, that the followers of Krishna should live holy and righteous lives, either for their own comfort and happiness, in this world or the next. All that is considered necessary for salvation

is, that believers should mention the name of Krishna. Then, no matter what may be the character of the worshippers, an abundant entrance into heaven is assured them.

To illustrate the efficacy of the mere name of Krishna, the Hindu gurus, or religious teachers, are fond of relating a story of a wicked woman who daily amused herself by teaching her parrot to repeat the name of Krishna. When the woman died, although she felt no sorrow for her sins, her spirit, it is asserted, went at once to heaven, where she was received with acclamations, and entered upon untold bliss. And all because, in teaching her parrot to talk, she had repeatedly mentioned the name of Krishna.

How different all this is from the teaching of Christ, who deprecated vain repetitions of the name of God, and laid such stress upon holy living as well as trustful faith, saying, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." The best wish we can express for the welfare of the people of India is, that in the religious life of the people Christ may take the place of Krishna.



INDIAN SNAKE CHARMERS.

IX.

SNAKES AND SNAKE WORSHIP.

THE very term snake has an objectionable sound with it, and we doubtless find it difficult to understand that the people of India can worship such a reptile. However, the fact remains that many of them do, for they fear them—especially the poisonous snakes—and worship them to escape the venom of their bite.

In Cashmere years ago, there were said to be seven

hundred temples for snake worship, but nearly all have been demolished. However, in the neighbourhood of Nagpore, or the city of the Naga or Snake, the old worship is still more or less practised. And in South India snake worship very generally prevails amongst the lower classes of the people. In the town of Trevandrum the other day, while a Christian colporteur was reading the Scriptures to some people in the courtyard of a house, a serpent passed by him. He wished to kill it, but was forbidden by his audience, who shouted, "Do not touch it—it is our god." What a god! Just think of falling down and worshipping a snake! To our Western feelings it is shocking in the extreme, but in the East it is an everyday occurrence.

A native gentleman, Sir Madava Row, speaking on this subject in a lecture, once remarked: "Though people die from their venomous bites, serpents are worshipped as living deities by many of my fellow-countrymen. Respectable citizens deem it a duty to set apart a cool patch in their gardens for the comfortable residence of snakes. Occasionally the reptiles creep out into the house itself, just by way of a little change. I have seen many title-deeds of estates in which the snakes are conveyed along with other rights to the purchaser. Cobras wander about freely and in broad daylight in certain of the famous pagodas. There is a temple dedicated to Krishna which is particularly sacred to cobras. Every time I have visited the temple I have been greeted by one or more of these reptiles. Once I saw a huge cobra quietly passing a few yards off, followed by a train of worshippers with

clasped hands. Suddenly it turned and began to wriggle on towards me, when I instantly recollected that I had some urgent business elsewhere and hurriedly left the sacred precincts."

There are more snakes in India than in any other part of the world, and a learned writer on the subject, Sir Joseph Fayrer, asserts that there are at least twenty-one distinct varieties of snakes in the East. Out of this number fortunately only four varieties are venomous, but then there are millions belonging to each variety or order. The snake in India that is most feared is of course the cobra, or to give it its full name, which is derived from the Portuguese, the Cobra di Capello. This deadly reptile is found all over Hindustan, and is remarkable for the faculty of dilating the back and sides of the neck, when excited, into the form of a hood.

The cobra is usually three or four feet long, of a pale, rusty brown colour above, and a bluish or yellowish white below. On the back of the neck there is a singular mark, always more or less clear, which bears such a close resemblance to an old-fashioned pair of spectacles that the reptile has from some people received the name of the "spectacles snake." Its ordinary food is lizards, flies, grasshoppers, and other small insects and animals.

There are many sad and thrilling stories told of adventures with snakes on the part of human beings, and every year a very great number of deaths occur, both amongst cattle and mankind, through the bite of snakes, and particularly through the bite of the cobra. It is estimated that 20,000 human beings

every year perish in India alone through this cause. While I was living in Calcutta I remember the case of a boy of ten years of age who was walking along a road in the suburbs and was bitten in the foot by a snake, and though every effort was made to save his life the poor little fellow died after two days of suffering. I remember also the case of a girl of thirteen who was bitten in the arm while she was asleep, and who died within a few hours. And such cases are occurring daily, for the snake is no respecter of persons, putting his venom into the form of a little child as readily as into the form of a grown-up man.

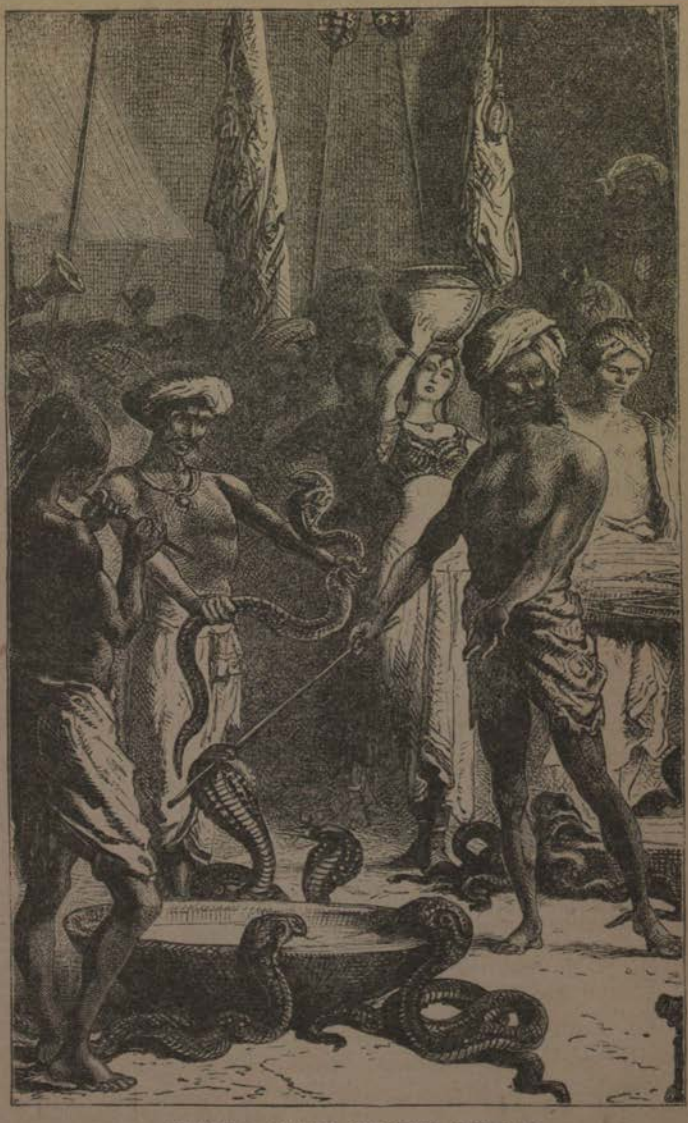
It is not often we hear of Europeans being bitten by snakes in India, though occasionally they have very narrow escapes. Bishop Heber, in his "Diary," tells a story or two on this subject. Writing on September 18th, 1823, while sailing on the Ganges, he says: "This morning, as I was at breakfast, the alarm was given of a great snake in the after-cabin, which had found its way into a basket containing two caps, presents for my wife and myself from Dacca. The reptile was immediately and without examination pronounced to be a cobra, and caused great alarm amongst my servants.

"However, on dislodging it from its retreat it proved to be only a water-snake. It appeared to have been coiled up very neatly round the fur of the cap, and though its bite would not have been venomous, it would certainly have inflicted a severe wound on anybody who had incautiously opened the basket. I had once or twice fancied I heard a gentle hissing, but the idea of a snake in the boat seemed

so impossible that I attributed the noise to different causes or to fancy. Much wonder was expressed at finding it in such a place, but as I have seen one of the same kind climb a tree, it is probable that it had ascended one of the ropes by which the boat is moored at night, and so got amongst us."

Bishop Heber then remarks: "I had heard of an English lady at Patna who once lay a whole night with a cobra under her pillow. She repeatedly thought during the night that something moved, and in the morning, when she snatched her pillow away, she found the thick black throat, the square head, and green diamond-like eye advanced within two inches of her neck. The snake fortunately was without malice, his hood was uninflated, and he was merely enjoying the warmth of his nest: but alas for her, if she had during the night pressed the reptile a little too roughly!"

Sir Edwin Arnold, in his "India Revisited," tells of a gentleman who lived at Malabar Hill, Bombay, and who, when sitting in his verandah one day, heard a rustling beneath his chair, which he took for the sound of his little dog's movements. Thereupon he snapped his fingers under the seat, calling the animal by name. Nothing answering, he looked beneath, and to his horror, saw two cobras there dallying with his suspended palm. In another moment he might all unconsciously have received his death wound. Then I have heard of a lady who when about to enter her bedroom one evening to get her bonnet was advised by her husband to take a light; and, fortunately for herself she did so, for she discovered a



FESTIVAL OF THE SERPENTS, BOMBAY.

cobra coiled up comfortably in the crown of the bonnet.

Snakes as a rule do not chase human beings, or seek to attack them, but rather try to escape out of the way. Knowing this characteristic of the reptile some people always go about with a stout walking-stick or umbrella, not so much with the idea of striking any snake they may meet as to give the reptile warning of their approach by the vibration of the ground, with the result that the snake usually glides rapidly away as the traveller approaches it.

Sometimes, however, vicious snakes are met which boldly attack a stranger, and seem determined to cause mischief. The Rev. J. Ewan, of Benares, in his "Sketches and Stories of Native Life," tells a remarkable tale of a vicious snake. He writes: "In the rainy season of 1880, I had the narrowest escape I have ever had. I was returning to Delhi about 9 a.m. one day, along the Agra road, when I saw a bright yellowish snake glide out from among the tombs and come on to the road. I apprehended no danger, and drove on, feeling confident it would get out of my way as I went forward. In this I was mistaken, for it stopped short in front of my horse. The poor brute was paralysed with fright and stood still. The snake was then by the footboard, and before I could take in the situation, it deliberately sprang at me. I instinctively dropped the reins, and the horrible thing flashed past, striking me on the tips of the fingers and the knees as it passed. The spring carried it over the conveyance; but it turned and renewed the attack, and I could distinctly hear

it beating against the bottom. Fortunately the horse, feeling the reins loose, dashed off and broke the spell. When I drew him up and looked back, the snake was still on the road as defiant as ever."

In the charming "Story of Coopooswamey," the author, a native Christian of South India, relates a snake tale about himself when a baby, which his mother had told him. Let me give the story just as it appears in the book, as it throws light on the feelings and sentiments of the Hindus with regard to snake worship. Coopooswamey's mother, it should be noted, was not a Christian. Speaking to her son on one occasion, this lady said: "Once when you were about two years old, you gave me a horrible fright. I left you playing by the side of the hedge in front of the house, and when I went to call you, I saw to my horror a large cobra winding itself round your body and under your legs. You were laughing and crowing and touching its glistening skin with your chubby hands. The serpent seemed pleased with your warmth, and with your gentle, childish way of touching. By a terrible effort I kept from screaming. I knew that if I made a noise or any sudden movement the snake would probably fix its fangs in you, and you would be dead in a few hours.

"I kept quite still, and at length the cobra, observing me, quickly glided into the hedge. Then my screams broke forth as I rushed and caught you in my arms, and pressed you to my bosom. The people came running to know what was the matter. When I told them they raised their hands in wonder." At this stage of the narrative, Coopooswamey exclaimed,

"Did you kill the snake?" but his mother replied with horror, "Kill the snake! we could not do that. It was a god that had come to bless you. Even the shadow of a cobra falling on any one is a good omen. How lucky, then, did we consider you, that the god had even embraced and fondled you."

Then the lad remarked, "Is that why you so often go to the snake hole near the house with offerings of eggs, camphor, and other things?" "Yes," replied his mother, "I have hardly missed a day in visiting the place where I saw the serpent disappear. Sometimes I break a cocoanut there, and sacrifice a fowl in honour of the god that was so gracious to you."

It would appear that poisonous snakes, dangerous though they are, have actually been made pets of by human beings, who have handled them freely. I have heard of a European gentleman at Rangoon, who kept cobras in his house, and who, when he wanted to show one, put his hand boldly into a narrow-mouthed basket, containing quite a number, and pulled out the one he had chosen. Mr. Edward Moor, in his book entitled "Oriental Fragments," relates that when he was a boy in India he took a great fancy to a little cobra which he found on the road. It was at first no larger than an ordinary penholder, and the lad kept it for some time in a bottle, feeding it with flies and crumbs of bread. As it got older and larger he put it into a larger bottle, and every now and then took it out for the amusement of himself and a playmate who whistled to the dancing of the pet.

In a while the snake was big enough almost to

fill a gallon bottle, and then it developed restive tendencies, and a neighbour calling at the house, might perhaps find the reptile coiled up on the sofa. One cold morning, Mr. Moor says, the strange creature crawled up into his bedroom, and nestled in the bed beside him, and from that day he became much attached to it. However, in the course of time, when the snake had grown to be more than a yard in length, though it had done no one any mischief, it was decided, in solemn family conclave, that it would be as well to part with it, for fear of future trouble. Accordingly the curious pet was carried to a rocky, sunny place, two or three miles away, and given its liberty; and thus the friendship between the snake and the boy was broken off, much to the distress of the latter, who mourned many days for the loss of his favourite.

In "Old Deccan Days," a book written by Miss Frere, a daughter of Sir Bartle Frere, a story is told of a Brahmin boy in the country west of Poona, who could, as he sat out of doors, by the charms of his voice, attract to himself and handle without fear all the snakes which might be within hearing in any thicket or dry stone wall, such as in that country is their favourite refuge. So great was the popular excitement among the Hindus regarding this boy, that thousands and tens of thousands of people flocked to see him; and as they witnessed the remarkable power he had over snakes, they regarded him also as a god, and proceeded to worship him. The poor lad, however, was at last bitten by one of the reptiles and died, and the wonder ceased.

It has often been a debated point as to whether snakes can kill each other—as to whether their poison is deadly when injected into each other's bodies, just as it is when injected into the bodies of animals and human beings. Dr. Vincent Richards, in his book entitled "Landmarks of Snake Poison Literature," says: "I have kept sixty to seventy cobras in a pit together, and they very often, on the slightest provocation, began to fight in a most savage and curious fashion. On being provoked, several commenced to hiss fiercely, and some would raise themselves up, expand their hoods, and begin a vigorous attack in all directions; and after making several ineffectual darts, two would catch each other by the mouth, rapidly entwine themselves, and after wriggling and struggling about in this state for some time, relax their hold. Then one would be seen gliding away vanquished to the corner of the cage, while the triumphant one, raised to its full balancing height, hissed out its challenge for a renewal of the combat. In what consisted the getting the worst of it, I could never discover, as neither of the combatants ever seemed any the worse for the fight; nor can I understand why one snake dreads another if no danger is involved." However, in a footnote to this paragraph, Dr. Richards announces that after other and numerous experiments he at last came to the conclusion that one species of snake could kill another by the injection of poison.

A paragraph which I saw in a Bombay paper a year or two ago, headed "A Duel between Snakes," should aid in settling the disputed point. A corre-

spondent writes: "Last Tuesday, when taking an afternoon stroll in my garden, I was surprised to see a cobra and a rock-snake in the road before me, moving in a circle and apparently following each other. This cautious manœuvre was pursued for a time, the circle closing at each round, until when within a few feet, I observed the cobra to stop, coil, and place itself in an attitude to strike. The rock-snake then passed round its antagonist several times, lessening the distance at each round, when it also stopped and began to coil. But before it was ready to strike, the cobra suddenly darted upon it. The evolutions were too rapid to be detected; and then again I distinctly observed both the snakes stretch out at full length. The rock-snake was enveloped in the folds of the cobra, which had also seized the rock-snake at the back of the head, and held him there. After a short interval the cobra gradually unfolded itself, loosened its grip with its mouth from the rock-snake's head, and moved away. I called to my gardener, who was working a few paces off, but before he could come up to the spot the victor of the duel disappeared in a neighbouring bush. On examination I found the rock-snake to be dead."

In his "Three Years of a Wanderer's Life," Mr. Keene tells the story of a snake and a mouse that is worth repeating. He writes: "I was visiting at a friend's house in Calcutta, and was on a certain evening sitting at dinner alone. I had finished and was still lingering at the table when a little mouse ran up on the top of a bowl with a sort of basket cover on it. I should not have thought that of itself

very singular, for the 'tribes on the frontier' make most unexpected incursions. But this mouse, when he got perched on the cover of the bowl, rose up on his hind legs, with his hands before him, and began to entertain me with the funniest little song you can imagine. Chit—chit, chup—chup—chit, he whistled, and kept it up before me in a most unembarrassed and self-possessed little way. I must have been a trying audience, for I leaned back in my chair and roared with laughter.

"However, as I looked at the little performer I gradually became aware of a shadow, a something strange gliding out from behind a dish toward the mouse. Silently and slowly it drew near: in another minute a beady snake's eye glittered in the lamplight. My hand stole softly for the carving-knife. The snake reared his head level with the mouse, and the poor little fellow's song, which had never ceased, became piercingly shrill, though he sat up rigidly erect and motionless. The head of the snake drew back a little to strike: and out flashed my carving-knife.

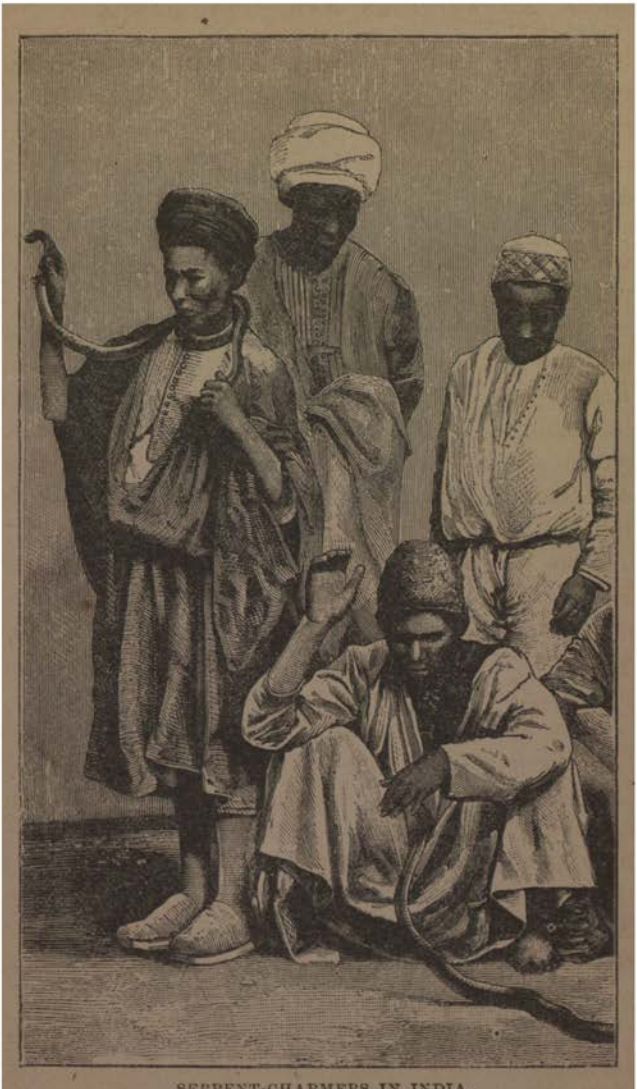
"The spell was broken instantly, for the mouse dropped and scampered. The snake was evidently wounded, for there were spots of blood on the table-cloth, and it was writhing about among the dishes and plates. I would not have believed, until I had seen it, how much of himself a snake can stow away under the edge of a plate. At last I saw the end of his tail projecting out from under the dish. A snake held by the tail and swung round rapidly cannot turn and bite. I grabbed the tail with my left thumb and finger, and drew him out until I judged the middle of his body to

be under the knife: then I came down and cut him in two." Thus was the little singing mouse saved from the jaws of death.

Everywhere in India are to be found wandering *samp-wallahs*, or snake-charmers, who for a trifling sum will favour you with an exhibition of snakes which they carry about in a basket or upon their persons. When in Calcutta I often called in these entertaining gentlemen with their snakes, more especially when visitors were in the house from England or Australia. I remember well one entertainment. Two dark fellows came in and squatted on the verandah, with some earthen pots which contained the snakes. The latter were taken out one by one, and made to dance to the noise of a *tubri*, a curious instrument from which the snake-charmers bring out some weird music. The dancing of half a dozen snakes all in a line was very peculiar and somewhat awe-inspiring, for it seemed as if at any moment they might turn on us, the spectators.

However, the men had the snakes well in hand, and made them go through many manœuvres in the dancing line. Then one of the men seized the nearest snake, and immediately twined it round his waist; the next he threw over his shoulders; the next round his throat; and the others round his head and his legs. And not satisfied with this startling display, he irritated the reptiles until they erected their heads and hissed with rage.

The snakes round the man's neck and head actually put out their forked tongues and struck him fiercely on the face, until the blood flowed down pretty freely.



SERPENT-CHARMERS IN INDIA.

The man did not seem to care, but only laughed. And no harm seemed to result from the wounds, which were probably only skin deep. So freely do snake-charmers usually handle their reptiles that some people have supposed that the poisonous fangs must have been previously extracted from the snakes. However, this is not the case.

When Sir Edwin Arnold paid his last visit to India he tells us that he put the matter to the test. A. snake-charmer who exhibited before him was questioned as to the presence or absence of poison in his snakes, and replied, "If the gentlefolk would supply a sheep or goat, they might quickly see whether he spoke a true word." "Eventually a white chicken was produced, and seizing his cobra by the neck the juggler pinched its tail and made it bite the poor fowl, which uttered a little cry when the sharp tooth punctured its thigh. But being replaced on the ground the chicken began to pick up rice with unconcern, apparently uninjured. In about four minutes however it ceased moving about, and began to look sick. In two minutes more it had dropped its beak upon the ground, and was evidently paralysed and unable to breathe freely. In another minute it fell over upon its side, and was dead with convulsions within ten minutes after the infliction of the wound."

Seeing that snakes are so common in India, and the bite of many of them so deadly, we can quite understand that great anxiety is shown to find out, if possible, something that will act as an antidote, that life may be saved. The poison of the cobra is secreted in a large gland in the head, and when the

serpent compresses its mouth upon any object the liquid flows through a cavity of a tooth, which is sharp as a needle, into the wound, and quickly runs through the system. Unfortunately nothing has yet been discovered which can, in a genuine case of poisoning, be looked upon as a certain cure.

Dr. Vincent Richards, the specialist already referred to, has examined one by one the so-called antidotes, such as ammonia, arsenic, mercury, nitrate of silver, oil and opium, and declares that all of them when weighed in the balances are found wanting. The man, it would appear, has yet to come forward, who will confer upon his fellow mortals the inestimable boon of a sure antidote to the bite of a venomous serpent.

Amongst other antidotes that have been tried in past years, and found of no use whatever, is the one which bears the name of "snake-stone." I have one in my possession which I bought at Benares from a snake-charmer. It was believed for many years, even by intelligent men, that there was a secretion in the head of a cobra, which, as the snake advanced in years, grew hard like a stone, and that this stone when extracted, as it was often supposed to be by snake-charmers, and applied to the wound inflicted by a snake bite, would immediately cause it to heal.

These "stones" are usually of a dark hue, and are flat like a tamarind stone, and about the same size; that is, say, the size of a threepenny bit. If put into a glass of water they sink, and emit small bubbles every half-score seconds. A snake stone was once sent to Professor Faraday to analyse, and he believed

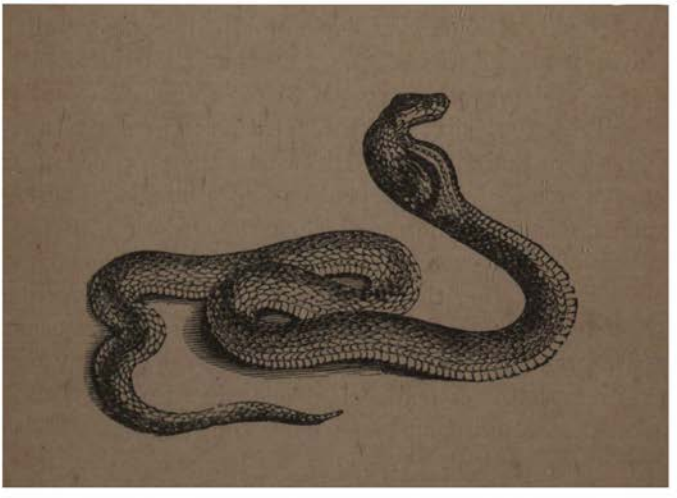
it to be "a piece of charred bone, which had been filled with blood several times, and then carefully charred again. It consisted almost entirely of phosphate of lime, and if broken showed an organic structure with cells and tubes." Probably the fullest and most reliable account of snake stones is to be found in Moor's "Oriental Fragments," to which I would refer any of my readers who may be specially interested in the subject. Mr. Moor, in a clever fashion, convicted a snake-charmer of deceit, and the man confessed that he was a rogue, and that snake stones were all an invention of the snake-charming fraternity, to impress the public with their cleverness and to add to their gains.

In the native almanacs the fifth day of Srawan (July-August) is noted as the birthday of the King of the Snakes, and on that day worship is very generally in India offered to snakes. In Benares Hindus of all ranks and of both sexes go to the famous Serpent's Wells in that city, and after bathing therein return quietly to their homes. Elsewhere the practice is for the people to draw a serpentine figure on their houses and do homage thereto. Then they adjourn to the nearest rocks or trees where serpents are known to live, and finding their holes, plant sticks near them, and winding cotton round the sticks hang up festoons of fragrant flowers.

After that is done, offerings of fruit, sugar, ghee and flour are placed round the holes, into which milk is very often poured. The women-folk and children then joining hands, circle five times round the snake's dwelling, and then lie down and watch anxiously to

see if the reptiles will come out of their holes and partake of the things presented to them. If the snakes do, which is usually the case, the foolish people are delighted, and go back to their homes believing that the snake-king has heard their prayers, and will give them his blessing.

When will the people of India learn that the only Being to be worshipped is God, and that the only thing to be feared is sin? It is sin that "biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." And the only remedy for sin-stricken souls is faith in Christ, of whom the Bible speaks when it says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."



FESTIVAL AT BENARES: WASHING IN THE HOLY RIVER GANGES.

I.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

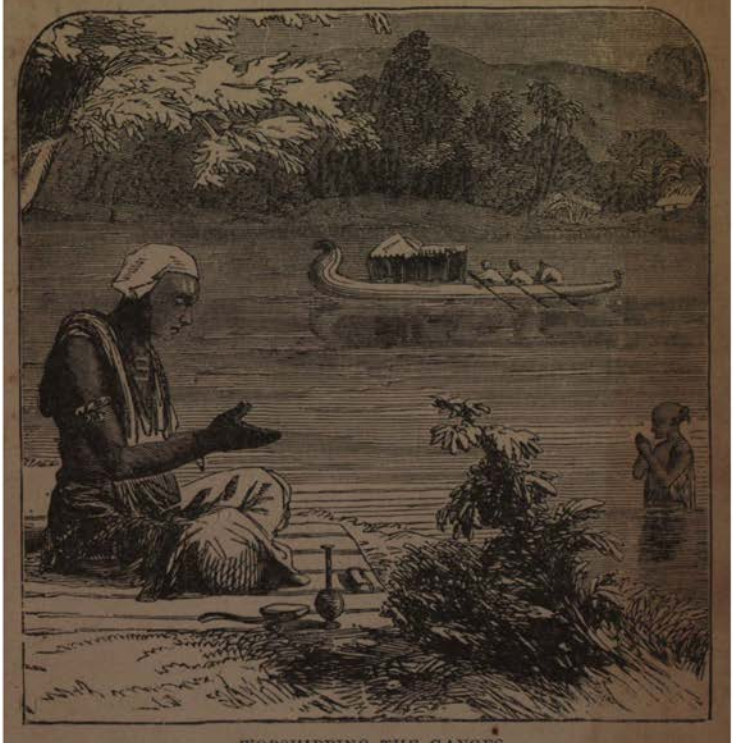
THE manners and customs of the people of India are an endless source of interest to visitors from Europe. All is so very different from what we are accustomed to at home, that we cannot but notice and comment on what we see and hear of the character of the people, their way of life, and general appearance.

Everything seems to be turned topsy-turvy, and it takes new arrivals in the East some time to get used to the remarkable change. "The Oriental has an odd way of doing everything backwards, as it seems to us, though from his point it is we who turn everything upside down. Their saw, for example, has the teeth set towards the handle, and the carpenter pulls it towards him; their screws turn the wrong way; their writing begins at the wrong end; they take off their shoes and keep on their hats, while we take off our hats and keep on our shoes; they beckon with the finger held downwards; and, strangest of all, if a man wishes to spite his enemy he occasionally does so by hurting himself."

Thus in both thought and action the people of the East differ radically from the people of the West, and these facts have to be taken into consideration when we desire to form an estimate of the character of the natives of India. We must take care that we do not condemn others simply because they differ from ourselves, for it does not necessarily follow that our ways of thinking and acting are the only true and right ways.

The *morning bath* is a favourite custom of the East, and it would be well if it were as widely followed in the West. It is a remarkable sight, in the early morning in India, to observe the natives of all ages and of both sexes going down to the river or the tank, and there performing their ablutions with great glee and every appearance of enjoyment. Of course the hot climate favours the practice, for no one is afraid of cold water or of a chill. The boys and girls

of India have not to be driven or coaxed to the river for their bath, as they are always delighted when the hour comes round, for it is one of the enjoyments of their life.



WORSHIPPING THE GANGES.

The custom of bathing is associated with religion. I do not know that the Hindus believe that "cleanliness is next to godliness," but they certainly affirm that their gods are pleased with them if they attend

regularly and punctiliously to their ablutions. If you watch the bathers closely you will observe that their lips move as if in prayer. They are in reality dedicating themselves to their idols, and praying that they may be cleansed from all defilement, incurred by touch, taste, deed, word or thought, known or unknown.

Unfortunately the people are not as particular as they ought to be with regard to the purity of the water in which they bathe. The river, of course, is all right, but sometimes the tanks in which they wash themselves are stagnant pools of filth and corruption, and are dangerous to health. It would be a great gain for India if the Imperial Government appointed inspectors of the tanks, whose duty it would be to see that all places of public ablution were kept in proper repair and free from all injurious matter. As it is, the universal custom of bathing in the East, which ought to be a great public blessing, is very often a means of propagating numerous diseases.

Amongst both Hindus and Moslems *morning salutations* are freely exchanged. Not only will friend greet friend, but neighbours will greet neighbours, and even strangers greet strangers. In the West we content ourselves usually, if we address people at all, with a brief "Good morning!" but in the East the salutation is invariably in the name of the Deity. Two Mohammedans meeting or passing one another, will commend each other to Allah; while two Hindus will commend each other to Rama or some other god. It seems to me a very pleasing custom.

The Hindus have a curious custom of marking the forehead, and rubbing other parts of the body with ashes, in the early morning, and these *caste or sectarian marks* are retained throughout the day. It is a disfiguring custom, and serves no good end, while at times it leads to strife. There are about seventy distinguishing marks in all, most of which are placed on the arms and breast. The face marks are the fewest, but they are the most striking. These marks consist of spots, circles, triangles, straight lines, curved lines, crescents, simple or in combination, and of varied colours. Thus a simple spot on the forehead symbolises Brahma the Supreme Being, while a spot in the centre of a circle inclosed in a triangle, symbolises the Hindu Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Some sects adopt a mark like an eccentric cross with the four points bent. Some are simply marked with three white lines, while others have perpendicular stripes. A small horizontal line on the forehead denotes having bathed—in fact, being ready for society.

The Hindus spend a lot of thought and time every morning over these sectarian marks, time which would be better spent in quiet meditation and prayer. I dislike the custom chiefly, however, because it makes a public display of differences in religious opinions, and thus helps to perpetuate feelings of class hatred.

In association with the morning bath, and at other times during the day, the people of India pay great *attention to their teeth.* It is a fact that Eastern people do not suffer anything like as much from decayed teeth as Western people, and one reason

probably is because they clean their teeth daily with great care. Tooth brushes are not used. Indeed the Hindus think our custom of using tooth brushes to be a most unclean and disgusting one, inasmuch as we do not have new ones daily, for the touch of saliva is deemed utterly polluting. The people of India simply use a piece of stick, usually the wood of a tamarind or nim tree, for purposes of teeth cleansing.

Miss Cumming, writing on this custom in her work on India, says: "Every Hindu bestows infinite care on his teeth, which he polishes vigorously with a soft flat stick, about the width of a finger. This is an important religious action, and must be preceded by ceremonially rinsing the mouth on awakening. As you pass through a native town in the early morning it seems as if the whole population had turned out of their houses to perform this part of their toilet in public, and such an amount of scraping and polishing goes on that you marvel how any enamel is left." The result is exceedingly satisfactory, however, for almost every mouth displays rows of dazzling ivory, and dentists are almost without occupation. In the matter of thorough attention to their teeth, English boys and girls might do well to imitate the people of India. Sound teeth, it should be borne in mind, are not only pleasant to look at, but are conducive to good health and good temper.

Dress is not a matter which very much exercises the attention of the millions of India. Some of the rich people put on beautiful and even costly clothing, but the common people are if anything too careless with regard to their apparel. Of course in a hot

climate very little clothing is needed, but decency requires that some should be used. Commonly, children go about quite naked, unless a string round the waist, with a key or coin attached to it, can be called a garment. The key is worn as a charm to keep away evil influences from the little ones. When boys and girls reach the age of five or six clothing is worn, but it is even then very scanty, consisting only of a cloth round the loins. And with the poor all through life very little more is worn even in the rainy or cold weather. Sometimes at night a sheet is wrapped round the body for warmth. Among well-to-do people the ordinary female dress is the sàree—a piece of cloth, between nine and ten cubits long, and two or two-and-a-half cubits broad, which is worn round the waist with one end covering the shoulders and the head. Of men the ordinary dress everywhere is the *dhoti*, which is wrapped round the middle of the body, and tucked up between the legs, while a part of it hangs down in front a good deal below the knees. A *chadur* is also used by people who can afford to have one, and is worn over the shoulders.

Of late years in the cities some of the native gentlemen have taken to imitating Europeans in their dress. It is surely a mistake. The native garments when ample and of good material look very picturesque, and are more suitable for an Eastern climate than European clothing. I do not suppose that the people generally will ever be foolish enough to discard their national costume, though it is to be hoped that the poorer classes will be led to be more particular with

respect to the decency of their personal appearance. Neatness and cleanliness in dress, both in the West and the East, are greatly to be desired on the part both of young people and adults, and in all classes of society.

Stockings are very seldom used by the natives of India; nor, indeed, are they needed. Shoes also are not common amongst the Hindus, though the Mohammedans wear them. The poorer classes, both male and female, especially in Bengal, go barefoot, and experience no inconvenience from the custom. Even amongst Mohammedans it is considered only reverent to take off their shoes when entering the courtyards of their mosques, and only respectful to leave them at the door when entering the dwelling house of a friend or stranger. Bare feet have always been regarded as signs of politeness in the East, just as a bare head has been in the West. Eastern people keep the head covered on all occasions both indoors and out, as a general rule, though recently in the large cities custom has been varying on this matter and also on the shoe question. The fact is, the presence of Europeans in India is slowly but surely working a change in some of the manners and customs of the people, and has certainly affected this time-honoured practice of taking off the shoes as a mark of respect. However, the change as yet is chiefly confined to the educated classes of society and to cities. The people as a whole still keep the head covered and the feet bare in the presence of those whom they regard as their social superiors.

Both Hindus and Mohammedans are apt to carry

their civility to the verge of *servility* and beyond it on occasion. The people of India lack what we might call a proper feeling of respect, what the French designate *amour propre.* A little more manliness and independence of character would be beneficial to the whole country. Very few of the people seem to have a mind or a will of their own in the presence of superiors. Indeed, the manners of the natives of India may be represented as cringing. In addressing a superior they will use such terms as "Lord," "Provider for the poor," "Representative of God," "Your worship," and so on; while they speak of themselves with the utmost humility as "Your slave."

There is a story told of a Lieutenant Governor of the North-west Provinces entering a public school on one occasion to question the lads as to their progress in knowledge. The pupils were overpowered by the honour done them, and seemed scarcely to know whether they were standing on their feet or their heads. Matters came to a climax, and the gravity of the great man was completely upset when, in answer to a question he had put as to what makes the earth go round the sun, the head scholar of the school exclaimed solemnly and earnestly, "Sir, the earth revolves by favour of your highness." Is not such servility disgraceful? Yet amongst men as well as boys in the East it is all too common. Why, I have known a servant in my own house in Calcutta, when I was displeased with him, fall down on the floor, and attempt to put one of my feet upon his neck as a sign of the most complete self-abasement and submission to my will. Such conduct was always a trial to me.

I like manliness, and thoroughly despise such servility. The people of India greatly need to be taught "self-respect," without which no people can be honoured and no nation can be great.

Yet, strange to say, while true self-respect is lacking in the Hindus and Mohammedans they are *not troubled as a rule with diffidence*, and they cannot be regarded as modest in their estimate of themselves. The Rev. F. H. Blackett, late of the Cambridge Mission, Delhi, writing on this point, says, "There is in all of these a serene self-complacency which is not easily disturbed, and is a source of great weakness and a great obstacle to their moral improvement, its root being obviously in the absence of any high external standard. Natives of India are not troubled with any excessive reserve on their own merits; if these are not readily apparent to others they are always willing to supply the deficiency." Thus *conceit* flourishes though self-respect does not.

Inquisitiveness is another failing of the people of India. They think that everybody's business is their business, and they do all they can to find out what salary you get, what failings or virtues you may have, and other matters of private interest. For instance, the servants in the house of a European will obtain keys to open drawers and desks when the master's back is turned, and will count money, and read any correspondence they find, if they can. I have known a packet of love-letters disappear for a few days, and then be brought back again. In all probability the precious parcel was placed for a while in the hands of some one who could read English, and who for a

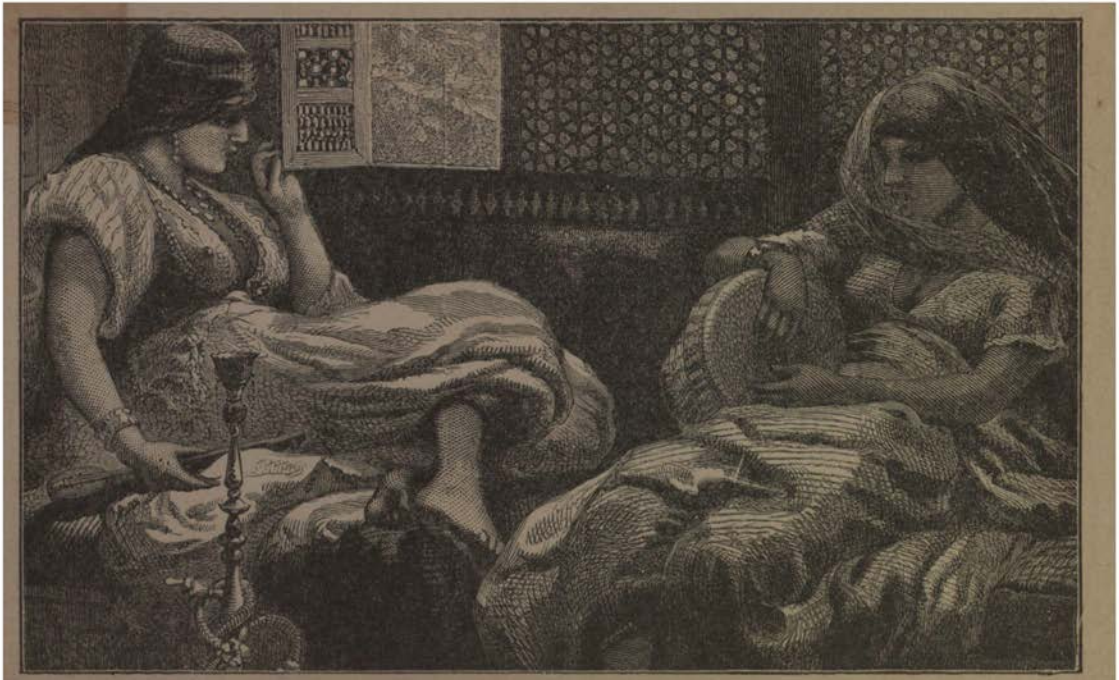
consideration would tell the inquisitive servant what the contents were. Such meddlesomeness seems unbearable, but English people in India get used to it in time, and put up with it simply because they cannot mend matters. As education spreads in the land, and the laws of morality are taught even to the servants, we may hope for a change for the better. "Paul Prys" are not pleasant people to have to deal with.

Even amongst the more respectable classes in India the inquisitorial spirit is very strongly developed, and it does not do to be too sensitive at the questions that may be asked by acquaintances or by entire strangers. Let me quote some remarks on this point which occur in the book called "Everyday Life in South India." Coopooswamey, the author of the work, says: "It was now about four o'clock in the afternoon, and as we slowly jogged along we passed many people returning to their villages from the market. One man took hold of the back of our cart to help him along. My father entered into conversation with him, and asked many questions regarding his business at the market and other private matters. I have observed there is a great difference between Hindus and Europeans in this respect. An Englishman is offended if you ask him where he is going, where he has come from, his object in coming, his profession, the amount of his salary and the like; whereas a Hindu regards such inquiries as an indication of polite and kindly interest in him. He will answer freely, though not always truthfully, all your queries, and will, by magnifying his salary, and in other ways, seek to give you a high opinion of his importance."

Coopooswamey in the foregoing quotation seems to imply that the Hindu custom of communicativeness is better than the English one of reserve. It may be that English people are too reserved; but I incline to the conviction that less inquisitiveness on the part of the people of India would be better for all parties concerned, especially as so much asking of questions inevitably leads to much telling of lies. It is a good thing to study to be quiet and to mind our own business.

Except amongst the well-to-do in India the houses of the people have *very little furniture* in them. Chairs and tables are almost unknown. The people usually sit or recline on a mat on the ground, and sleep on a little framework of bamboo called a charpoy. At any moment in India a man could easily take up his bed and walk. Our custom of sitting on chairs seems very comical to the natives who live in country places, if they happen to enter a European house. I well remember the perplexity of a young man who was brought by an evangelist to see me in Calcutta, when I offered him a chair and asked him to sit down. He stared at the chair in amazement, and then, feeling that he ought to do something, he first stood upon it, and then doubling up his feet under him sat on it in true Eastern fashion like a tailor on his bench.

The habit the natives have of sitting on the ground poised on the soles of their feet is a very peculiar one also. It is a position in which a European would have difficulty in retaining his balance, and yet the Hindus adopt it as an attitude of rest. A coachman, for instance, will get off his comfortable box directly



AN INDIAN HAREEM.

the carriage stops anywhere, and will squat in the dust and poise himself on the soles of his feet with his shoulders almost between his knees, and enjoy himself resting thus by the hour together, while waiting for his master and mistress.

It is a custom in India to *dismiss a visitor* who may have called upon you when you think he has stayed long enough. Of course in England it would be considered the height of rudeness to do such a thing, but in the East it is a right course to take. Mr. Minturn, in his book entitled "From New York to Delhi," relates an experience he had with a visitor in his travels, who bored him greatly, owing to his ignorance of this Eastern custom. When in the neighbourhood of Benares, he wrote: "On my return to the Dak Bungalow, I was accosted by the Zemindar of the village, a mild-looking young Mussulman, who asked permission to come in and see me. This being granted he sat down while I breakfasted. It soon came out that his object was to practise his English upon me. He presented me with his card in Persian, and I gave him mine in English, and we kept up quite a conversation on the propriety of Mussulmans eating with Christians, which they refuse to do in India. He afterwards began begging for books, paper, and other things, and offered to sell me his ring, when I became disgusted and dismissed him. His visit was longer than he intended it to be, from my ignorance of the Indian usage which forbids a visitor to depart until he has received permission from his host. I had been hoping he would go; and when he began begging, expressed my wishes to my servant,

who advised me to say, 'There is permission to depart,' when he looked very grateful, put on his shoes, salaamed, and quickly left."

Untruthfulness and dishonesty are bad traits of Eastern character. To tell a lie seems, I am afraid, to many Hindus and Mohammedans, as natural as to tell the truth. Missionaries, in their dealings with young people in the colleges and schools, have great difficulty in getting them to understand that it is wrong to deceive, wrong to tell lies, and wrong to purloin articles that belong to others.

Europeans, in association with native servants, find the same absence of truthfulness and honesty. Taking them altogether, servants in India are useful and faithful; but it seems almost impossible for them to be straightforward and upright in all their conduct. The fact is, there is no religious teaching on these questions of morality, and the example of the so-called gods of the land, particularly Krishna and Siva, is very injurious, for they are credited with doing all kinds of wicked things. I was fortunate in my servants while in India; but still every now and then something would disappear from the house. I would miss money out of my pockets, and writing paper out of my desk, and various ornaments and curiosities I had collected would vanish from the walls and no more be seen or heard of.

One night I missed a new silk umbrella on which I had just turned my back for a moment. As I felt sure it could not have been taken away, but must be hidden somewhere in the house, I called the servants together and asked them to assist me in finding it.

Our search was in vain. However, at midnight I ransacked the house again on my own account, and at last came across the missing article stowed away behind the sideboard in the dining-room. Foolishly, I resolved to leave it there till morning, and then show it to the servants, and try to convict one of them of hiding it with felonious intent. After breakfast I marshalled the whole household and led them to the sideboard; but the thief had been too sharp for me, for the umbrella was no longer there. Words fail me to describe my chagrin at the discovery. As for the servants, not a muscle of their countenances moved, though I could see from the sparkle in their eyes that they were enjoying my discomfiture. I had to buy another umbrella.

Another bad custom of Eastern people is that of running into *debt*. It is noticeable in all classes of society, and even amongst native Christians, who ought to know better, and who ought to set a better example to their non-Christian countrymen. Debt incurred chiefly in connection with marriage ceremonies, which are celebrated on a grand scale; and once in debt it is almost impossible for the poorer classes to get free, as the money-lenders charge high interest, and it is all the people can do to meet the payments as they fall due. Thus many of the people are kept for life under the yoke of debt.

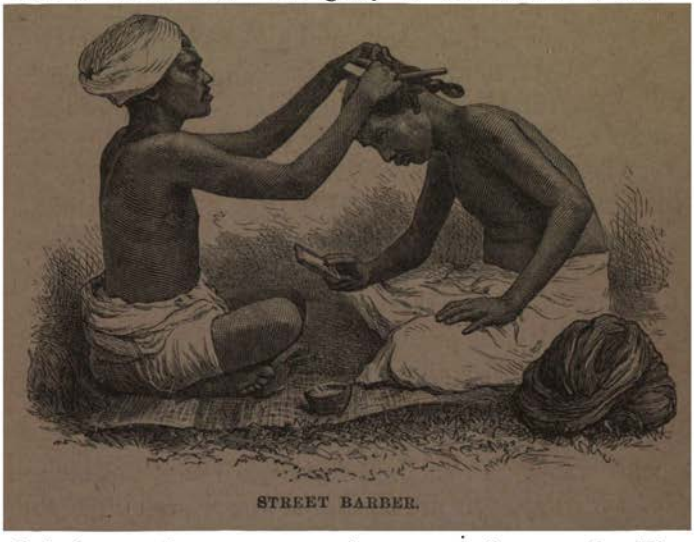
The Rev. F. H. Blackett, in his "Two Years in an Indian Mission," says: "The native of India is always in debt. There was a village near Delhi where the people were poor, but free from debt. A canal was made, and the value of the land thereby much in-

creased; the people became prosperous, and also got into debt. The reason why they were not in debt before was that their land was too poor to serve as a security, but as soon as that was improved they could raise money on the security of their crops, and promptly did so. If a native is not in debt it is generally because no one will lend him anything." Truly it is a sad state of things, and there is great need for a reformation in the matter of debt. This bad practice is one of the curses of India, and is the source of endless trouble and sorrow. It is a subject on which missionaries often speak to the people, quoting to them the Apostolic injunction, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another."

One of the sights of India, and one which my young readers would be sure to notice if they travelled in the East, is the *barbers plying their razors in the streets and the market-places.* The Hindus never shave themselves, though it is a general custom to be shaved. The Mohammedans seldom shave, as the beard is sacred, being a passport to Mecca and to Paradise. Amongst the Hindus the people called Rajputs and some others allow the beard to grow, but the general practice is to have the face and part of the head shaved. I have often stood in the street and watched with curiosity and amusement the skilful operations of the barber, who, with a miserable apology for a razor, would industriously scrape away at the chins and craniums of his customers. I noticed that a small tuft was always left on the top of the head; and this, I was told, rightly or wrongly, was left for the convenience of celestial messengers, who would thus

be able, after death, to clutch the Hindus struggling in "the sea of sin," and drag them through to the shores of the Better Land. Religion, you see, in India, even plays a part in the shaving of the head. Is it not a foolish and superstitious custom?

The women-folk amongst the Hindus do not have the head shaved except when they become widows. The belief is that "the glory of the woman is her



STREET BARBER.

hair," and they encourage it to grow long, and will not, as a rule, voluntarily sacrifice a single hair. An exception is made, however, when they go on pilgrimage to Allahabad to bathe in the sacred confluence of the Ganges and Jumna, which takes place near that city. "Once a year, there, at the junction of the holy river, it is deemed the honourable privilege of a good wife, with her husband's sanction, to offer the tips of

her long hair, which are most solemnly cut off by the priests with golden scissors, while reciting prayers and verses from the sacred books. The hair thus sacrificed is laid on a metal dish, with a gift of coin from the husband. The priest takes the coin, and the holy river receives the hair." The deed is regarded as a meritorious one, sure to secure the favour and blessing of the gods.

Smoking is indulged in by young and old in India. I have seen mere children pulling away at the native pipe. Boys, however, never smoke in the presence of their parents, nor do students in the company of their tutors. It is not considered respectable for women to smoke, though many of them are known to do so and to like it. There seems indeed in India to be a perfect passion for the use of tobacco. That less harm results from the custom of smoking in the East than in the West is doubtless due to the fact that the smoke passes through water ere it reaches the mouth, and is thus greatly purified of the injurious nicotine, which is the bane of all smokers.

The ordinary Hindu pipe is a cocoanut shell filled with water. To this are fixed two tubes, the longer of which goes to the bottom of the water, while the other, which just enters the nut, has a clay cup attached to it to hold the weed. The tobacco mixed with molasses is so damp that it will not burn without the addition of a little charcoal. When the long tube is put to the mouth, and a vigorous breath is drawn, the smoky air coming through the water makes a gurgling sound, which has led to the expressive name of Hubble-Bubble being given to the

pipe. Many smokers dispense with the long tube, and put the mouth to the little hole in the cocoanut.

From morning till night the Hubble-Bubble is sucked as opportunity presents ; and sometimes a circle of friends may be observed having a good time together with just one pipe amongst them, which passes round the circle regularly if somewhat slowly. However, as time is no object in India, smokers patiently wait for their turn in the common pipe. For my part, I think it is a pity that the habit of smoking is indulged in so freely both in the West and the East. Boys, at any rate, would be better without it.

The food of the people of India is worthy of notice, as it differs from our own in the matter of meat. The Hindus are vegetarians. Ordinarily the diet is exceedingly simple and light—the solid food consisting mainly of rice, wheat or other grains, and of vegetables and fish ; and the drink of water and milk. The prejudice against butchers' meat is very strong, though occasionally a Hindu will eat a little goat's flesh or venison, if it has been sacrificed before an idol. Fruits are plentiful and cheap in the country and are largely eaten.

Knives and forks are not used at meals, nor even spoons. Plates also amongst the poorer classes are unknown, and the food is eaten off palm leaves or any other convenient leaf. It is surprising with what dexterity the Hindus can eat, and still more surprising to notice the quantity that disappears down their capacious throats. Of course it must be borne in mind that rice is not a very satisfying food, and quantity has to make up for quality.

Just after a meal, and at other times during the day, the natives of India may be observed *chewing what is called pân.* And what is pân? It is a tonic ingredient composed of betel-nut, lime, cinnamon, cardamus, and other spices, wrapped in a pân leaf and fastened with a clove. This concoction is put bodily into the mouth and vigorously chewed. The taste is aromatic and slightly astringent, and is said to aid digestion. A peculiarity of it is that it makes the saliva quite red, and thus gives a repulsive appearance to the mouth. It is a national custom to offer this pân or betel to guests, and it would be considered the height of rudeness to refuse it.

Europeans, however, invariably decline to take it, but they are excused on the ground of their nationality. It is a custom that Europeans cannot get used to, and generally regard with disgust. Miss Cumming tells us that when in the Himalayas she tried to take pân, but in vain. She writes: "All this time I found myself provided with an honorary escort, a white-robed moonshee or scribe, who had taken a lift on the top of my carriage, and who in return was continually bringing me fruit, and insisted on teaching me to chew betel-nut as the greatest delicacy he had to offer. It was unspeakably nasty, and I was thankful next day to find that my teeth were not permanently stained red."

Bishop Heber, however, had a better opinion of pân, for he wrote in his diary, on June 28th, 1824: "I tried chewing the betel to-day, and thought it not unpleasant; at least, I can easily believe that where it is fashionable people may soon grow fond of it. It is

warm and pungent. My servants fancy it is good for the teeth; but they do not all take it. I see about half the crew without the stain on their lips; but I do not think the teeth of the others are better."

What *a noisy people* the Hindus are, and the Mohammedans likewise! They seem unable to talk without shouting, and they are ready at a moment's notice to have a wrangle over a few coppers. It used to be a grief to me to hear my servants loudly quarrelling over the veriest trifle; and it was a distraction also, for the strife would usually continue for half an hour or more, and while it lasted it was impossible to study or to write with any comfort.

And what dreadful language was used! It is said that no race on the face of the earth has so large a vocabulary of oaths as the Hindu. To call another "The child of an owl," "The son of a chicken," or "Toom gudha"—*i.e.*, "You donkey!" is, comparatively speaking, to utter pleasant words. Much more dreadful execrations are used, and the people curse one another unto the third and fourth generation.

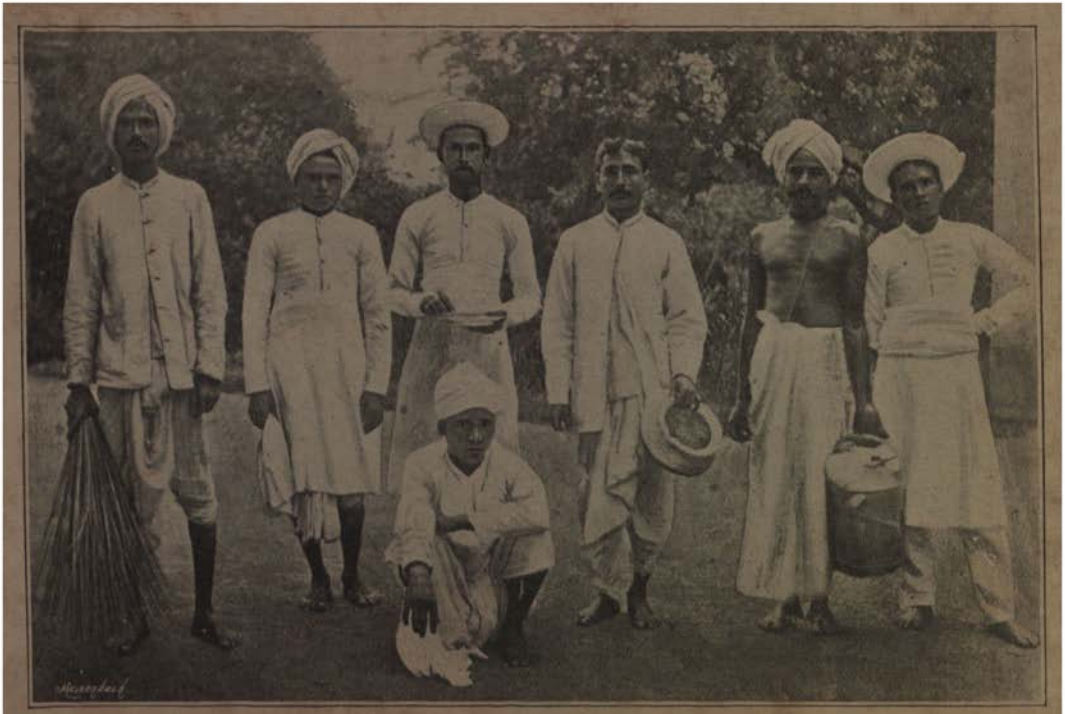
Yet while the natives of India are so free with abusive words, they *seldom proceed to blows.* Their swords are curses. If they do under great provocation proceed to violence, it is generally nothing worse than the knocking off of a turban or head-dress, or a resounding smack with the open hand, or a blow with slipper. No great harm is done. And once blows have been struck the people seem frightened with what has occurred, and the tumult immediately subsides.

In this matter Eastern people differ greatly from

Western, for with the latter one blow generally leads to another, and the strife grows fiercer and more deadly, and confusion becomes worse confounded. It is a pity that everywhere human beings have not more control over their angry passions. The Eastern saying is very true—"Greater is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." It is wise to "leave off strife before it be meddled with."

There are two words often used in the East to which I would call the special attention of my young readers. They are *pukka* and *cutcha*. Pukka is used to express everything that is good, solid, and enduring, while cutcha represents the opposite characteristics. For example, if a man is erecting a building of stone or bricks, and is putting good cement and plaster on the structure, then he is making what is called "a pukka job of it," but if he uses inferior materials it is called "cutcha work." In architecture, the public buildings of Lucknow compared with those of Delhi are cutcha; for though they have a good appearance to the outside view, they are not solid and enduring as well as beautiful like the latter.

Then, too, the people of the East speak of a cutcha or pukka appointment, of a cutcha or pukka road, and of cutcha or pukka characters. The words are comprehensive and expressive, and might with advantage be taken over into our English vocabulary. Anyway, I hope that all who read this account of the manners and customs of the people of India will discriminate between the good and the bad, the temporary and the lasting, the cutcha and the pukka, and judge accordingly.



THE AUTHOR'S NATIVE SERVANTS; CALCUTTA.

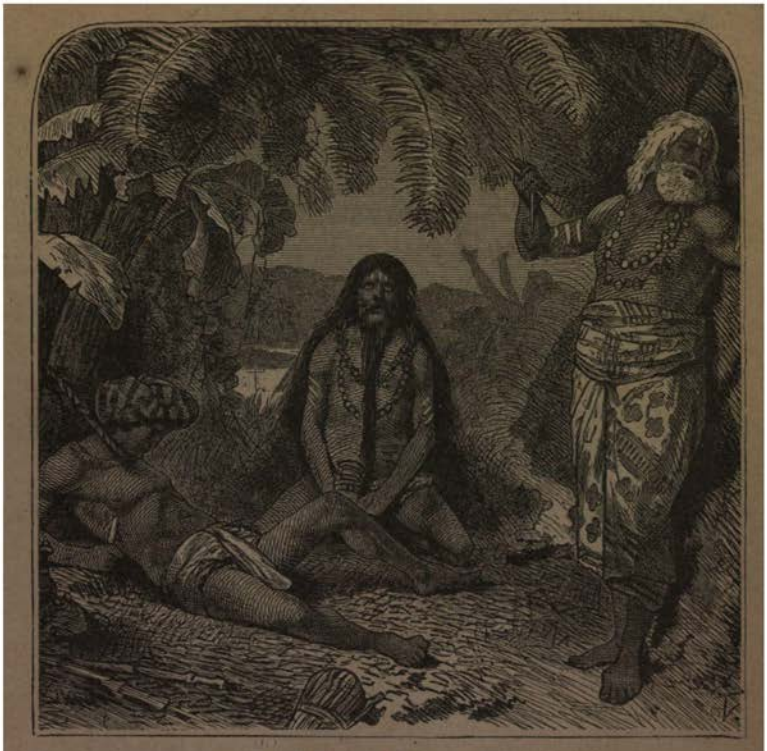
I would conclude this chapter with a brief reference to the Eastern methods of *the disposal of the dead.* All the world over the day of death as well as the day of birth comes to every child of Adam. Methods of disposal of the dead, however, vary with different nationalities and races. The Parsees, about whom I shall give many particulars in a later chapter, expose their dead bodies on what are called Towers of Silence, until they crumble to dust. Mohammedans bury their dead in the earth much as Christians do. Hindus, however, burn their dead.

It is in my judgment a sad spectacle to go to a Hindu burning-ghaut and watch the bodies of young and old being brought to be cremated. As I stood near a ghaut one day on the banks of the Ganges, a dead man was carried past me, borne on four bamboos. The bearers chanted "Ram! Ram! Ram is the true God!" And those who followed with the fire and the sacred water answered, "What you say, brothers, is true!" Then the body was laid on the wood provided for it, a light was applied, and the corpse was slowly consumed. I remember at the time thinking that when my last hour arrived I should like to be in dear old England, and be buried in the graveyard of a church which I have known and loved for many years, where dear ones now lie at rest.

I prefer burial on the "earth to earth" principle to cremation. Yet it matters little, except for sanitary purposes, how our bodies are disposed of after death! The great concern for us all, my young readers, is to live well. Then we shall find that, whether like the

Parsees we are "exposed," or like the Hindus we are "cremated," or like other races we are "buried"—"to die is gain."

DANCING GIRL, HYDERABAD.



INDIAN FAKIRS OR PENITENTS.

II.

FAKIRS OR SAINTS.

IN India there is a class of religious mendicants called Fakirs or Saints, about whom I am sure my young readers would like to have some account. If we look up the word fakir, in, say Webster's Dictionary, we find it explained thus—"An

Oriental religious ascetic or begging monk." I remember when in India, however, hearing a much fuller definition of the term. It was given by J. G. Shome, Esq., in a paper which he read before the Calcutta Missionary Conference on "Fakirism as a Mode of Evangelistic Work." Mr. Shome said: "Fakir is an Arabic word, and contains three principal letters *fe*, *caf*, and *re*. *Fe* stands for a word which means starvation, *caf* for a word which means contentment, and *re* for a word which means austerity. A fakir is a person who has these qualities."

Though of Arabian origin, the term fakir is applied in India both to Hindu and Moslem ascetics, though other names are also used, such as Gosains, Bairagis and Yogis. Though fakirs are generally regarded in the East as holy or saintly characters, much like the monks of Europe, yet in too many cases they are nothing of the kind, but a dirty, idle, dissolute community, living by their wits, and imposing upon the religious credulity and feelings of compassion of the people. The more thoughtful natives of India say that by far the great majority of fakirs are most pitiable characters, averse to labour, and inclined to take life easy by begging.

The clothing and general appearance of fakirs is most grotesque. The best dressed amongst them, the gentlemen of the profession, wear deep yellow or saffron robes, that being a sacred colour, pleasing to the gods. As a general rule, however, the clothing that is worn is simply a dirty rag round the loins, and a string of beads round the neck; while under the right arm may be seen a tiger's skin, and in the hand

a hollow gourd with which to draw water. The head presents the appearance of a filthy mass of tangled hair. It is difficult to imagine a more living picture of squalid wretchedness than these poor creatures of India called fakirs or saints.

Now and again a fakir may be seen in a country place absolutely naked—"sun-clad," as it is called. I saw one once at Gaya. To go about "sun-clad" was some time back very popular amongst the fraternity, but the British Government has very properly issued a bye-law against the custom. Still, however, it is practised in some places. Mr. Minturn, in his book of travels, says: "I noticed among the crowds in North India a good many fakirs, or religious mendicants. They generally wear little clothing, and are daubed over with streaks of mud. One of them was entirely naked, his hair dressed with feathers, and covered from head to foot with a yellow powder. I thought he must be cold in this costume (as it was the winter season); but I learned afterwards that it was a common dodge with the fakirs to rub this powder into the skin, as it occasions a slight cuticular irritation, and thus yields an artificial warmth."

In another part of his book Mr. Minturn says: "Another object of interest near Manpoor was a yogi. He was a youth of about twenty years, entirely naked, smeared with mud and cow-dung, and altogether one of the most disgusting beings I ever set my eyes on; still, the inhabitants seemed to treat him with great veneration." In a most valuable work by Bishop Thoburn, of Calcutta, entitled, "My Missionary Apprenticeship," the following incident is found. At the

time the author was travelling in the Himalayas. "Late at night I went out for a little walk, and had made a turn up and down the little pathway by the tent, when I was startled by the figure of a man, perfectly nude, standing on a spur of rock which jutted out over the seething river below. His matted hair was bound up on the crown of his head, and he stood perfectly erect and still, with his clasped hands stretched towards the stars, while he seemed to be gazing intently into the distant heavens. A flickering camp-fire under a tree behind him threw its light upon his form, so as to give him a strange ghost-like appearance, and for the moment I was quite startled by the seeming spectre. I watched him a short time, but he did not move, and he probably remained there long after I had fallen asleep."

I have heard of another case of a Hindu fakir, who would persist in going about the city of Lucknow, "sun-clad," at all hours of the day, to the vexation of many of the inhabitants. The holy man was again and again arrested, and taken before the English magistrate, and warned that he would be punished if he persisted in defying the laws of public decency. The stupid fellow, however, refused to mend his ways, and was finally imprisoned, and ordered to receive ten stripes. When set at liberty he was presented with a waist-cloth, and told that he must beware of offending again.

The news of the punishment of the saintly fakir spread like wildfire throughout the city, and greatly displeased some of the people, who thought that the magistrate had gone too far. Others were delighted,

however, that the *yogi* had been taught a lesson, more especially as the flogging had frightened him, and cured him of his offence. The saint was greatly chaffed as he went through the streets with his brand-new clothing on; and when asked how it was such a holy man as he had been subjected to such indignities, he gave the following explanation of events, which was ingenious if not convincing. He said, "In my former birth I was a washerman, and the magistrate was my donkey. I used to treat him abominably. I would load him up with heavy bundles till his legs were bending under him, then sit on the top and whip him up. In this life things have changed. I have been born a poor fakir, and he a magistrate, that he may pay me back in my own coin the injury I did him." Thus the troublesome but good-humoured mendicant, in true Eastern fashion, sought to turn the laugh against the Englishman.

The person to whom Bishop Thoburn referred as standing naked and alone on a spur of rock in the Himalayan mountains was a typical Hindu saintly character of the best sort. The idea of such is that a man should withdraw himself from the world, and in absolute quiet concentrate his thoughts on God alone. And in Western lands we have the same idea as illustrated by the actions of monks and nuns, who have retired to desert places, or to monasteries or nunneries. The idea is not, however, Scriptural; for the Bible teaches us that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is,' and of that which is to come." We cannot but regard with feelings of respectful pity the misguided

people who truly believe that God is pleased with their voluntary severance from their fellows, and the endurance of many hardships, including the infliction of austerities upon their bodies.

Very remarkable things are related of Indian fakirs in the matter of austerities. Some will hang themselves up by the feet head downwards, and remain in that position for a long time; others will take a vow of silence for five or ten or twenty years; others will make long pilgrimages to various shrines, painfully "measuring their length" on the ground all the way; others will hold up the right hand over the head until it has become stiff and fixed; others will clench the hand till the nails grow through the palm; others will sit between four fires with the blazing sun overhead, or stand up to the neck in water for hours; and others will walk round a temple yard wearing shoes studded inside with sharp nails. In short, there seems to be no folly or personal cruelty for the sake of obtaining renown and merit that fakirs will not commit or undergo.

In proof of the foregoing statements let me give an instance or two that I have myself witnessed, and a few illustrative stories that I have heard or read. At the Temple of Kalighat near Calcutta, I often saw more than one mendicant with feet twisted under the body and with hand uplifted as in the engraving on p. 46. The arm had become paralysed with disuse. Then one year when I was visiting Allahabad I remember seeing an aged man lying on a clay table or bed on the bank of the river Jamna, with only a single sheet over him to protect him from the scorching sun.

This fakir was quite ready to speak when spoken to, and, though very feeble, was very cheerful. He stated that he was over ninety years of age, and had been sixty years in the same place, never moving except to go down at midnight to bathe in the spot where the Ganges and the Jamna meet, which is considered specially sacred.

I noticed that the old man's face was deeply pitted with small-pox ; and on being questioned on this point, he said that God had smitten him with disease when twenty years of age, and that he was not only severely marked but had lost his sight. Lifting up his sightless orbs the fakir presented a sad appearance, and my heart went out to him in sympathy. When asked if the austerities of his life, exposed as he was to the heat by day and the cold by night, and to all the changes of the seasons, did not distress him and dishearten him at times, he answered, "Oh no, I am perfectly happy ! I spend my time in thinking of the gods, and I never get tired of thinking of those great beings."

His next remark startled me considerably, for it was to the effect that he was without sin, and, in fact, had never sinned. Some neighbours I talked with afterwards about the old man told a different tale, however. Their statement was that in his early days the fakir had lived a wild life ; but by his austerities, and especially by his bathing in the confluence of the sacred rivers, his guilt had all been washed away, and he was now an example of holiness to the whole world. This famous saint has recently, I believe, passed from time into eternity.

Mr. Bholanath Chunder, in his book entitled "The Travels of a Hindu," speaks of a certain fakir named Mahapurush of Kidderpore, who was evidently a curious character. Let me quote the passage, which runs: "This saint was apparently a man about forty years of age, with a very fair complexion, and jet-black hair. He did not eat or drink anything, nor speak a word, but remained in a sitting posture with his legs and thighs crossed, absorbed in meditation. His fasting, strange to say, did not appear to tell upon his health. To awake him from his meditations smelling-salt had been held to his nose, hot brands had been applied to his body, he had been kept sunk in the river for hours; but nothing awoke him from his reveries, or made him utter a word. Both Europeans and natives flocked to see him,

A FAKIR, BOMBAY.

and went away wondering at the curious man. At last milk was forced down his throat and more substantial food, when the cravings of his senses were gradually awakened; but he died in a few days of dysentery."

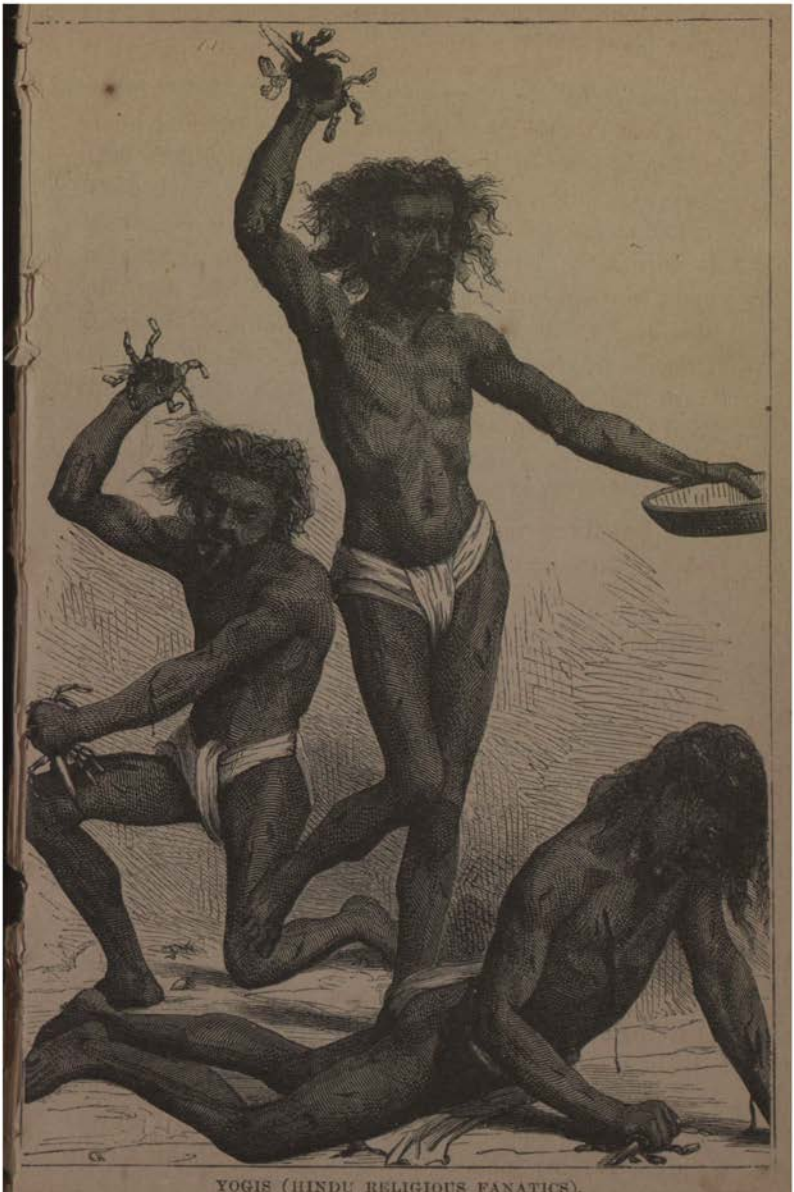
Bishop Heber also, in his famous "Diary," has much to say about strange cases of austerity amongst fakirs. Let me give one instance. It is taken from the second volume, and is as follows:—"As I passed through the principal street of Khanwah in my evening's walk, I saw a very young man naked and covered with chalk and ashes, his hair wreathed with withered leaves and flowers, working with his hands and a small trowel in a hole about big enough to hide him if he stooped down. I asked him if he were sinking a well; but a bystander told me that he was a Mussulman fakir from the celebrated shrine near Ajmere, that this was his dwelling, and that he used to make a fire at the bottom and cower over it. They called this a suttee, but explained themselves to mean that he would not actually kill, but only roast himself by way of penance. I attempted as far as I could to reason with him, but obtained no answer except a sort of faint smile. His countenance was pretty strongly marked by insanity. I gave him a few pice, which he received in silence, and laid down on a stone, then touched his forehead respectfully, and resumed his work, scraping with his hands like a mole."

In January 1812 the celebrated missionary, the Rev. W. Ward, witnessed what he described as "uncommonly severe acts of religious austerity," on the part of fakirs in the suburbs of Calcutta. It seems that a number of these saints surrounded themselves

daily with scorching fires, and for three or four hours rested, in front of the flames, on their shoulders with their legs in the air, repeating the names of their gods, and counting their beads. Crowds of people assembled to witness the strange proceedings of the infatuated men, who continued their austerities in the night by standing up to their necks in the Ganges for two or three hours, counting their beads.

In his well-known book on "The Hindus," Mr. Ward tells of a visit he paid to Saugar Island, a celebrated place of pilgrimage at the mouth of the Ganges. "At the temple of Kapila there," he says, "we found two mendicants from the Upper Provinces, one of them a young man, who had held up his left arm till it was become stiff. They were both covered with ashes; their hair clotted with dirt and tied in a bunch at the top of the head, and were without any covering except the bark of some tree and a shred of cloth drawn up betwixt their legs. At a distance they could scarcely be distinguished as men, and it appeared almost impossible for human beings to manifest a greater disregard of the body.

"We asked the young man how long he had held up his arm in this manner? He said, 'For three years.' To the question whether it produced any pain, he replied, that as far as his body was concerned it did so for the first six months. The nails of this hand were grown long like the claws of a bird of prey. In his hut we saw two bead-rolls made of the stalk of the basil, a deer's skin, the horns of a deer, some embers, and a piece of sacking. When asked why he embraced this manner of life, the young fakir's reply



YOGIS (HINDU RELIGIOUS FANATICS).

implied an indifference to future rewards. He seemed scarcely willing to confess that he had any connections, father or mother, and reluctantly mentioned the place of his birth. Respecting his food he manifested the same indifference, though we discovered in one of the temples a large quantity of corn, clarified butter, and spices.

"The other fakir was less communicative but more intent on his devotions: he had a separate hut, and as though all desire of human society and friendship was extinguished, these persons, the only human beings in the district, seemed to have no connection with each other. At a distance from the temple we saw a wild hog, and on the sand in several places fresh marks of the feet of a large tiger. The young man informed us, with perfect indifference, that during the three preceding months six persons had been taken away by tigers; and added, in the same tone, that the human body was the natural food of the tiger, and that such a death was no mark of the divine displeasure. We asked him whether he did not think it a fortunate circumstance that while so many of his companions had been devoured by tigers he was spared. However, he did not appear to feel this sentiment, but said that the tigers would eventually take him also."

Mr. Ward's reference to tigers eating fakirs brings to my mind a passage I read in a book I was studying when preparing the chapter in the previous volume on "Snakes and Snake Worship." Dr. Vincent Richards, in his "Landmarks of Snake Poison Literature," writes: "It appears that before the woodcutters will go into a fresh patch of jungle in the Soonderbunds they

send a holy man, a Hindu, to the place to propitiate the wild animals. He erects a small hut in which he stops for the night, if he is not eaten in the meantime. If all goes well and the *yogi* is untouched it is assumed that the jungle may be safely worked. Occasionally it happens that a hungry brute refuses to be propitiated in any way but in a natural manner, and eats a *yogi*. When the woodcutters are asked to explain why the holy man has been eaten, notwithstanding his mantras or charms, they say that he must either have had a very indifferent character, which was probably true, or he had forgotten his mantras when attacked by the tiger."

There have been cases known of fakirs taming tigers and keeping them as companions in their loneliness in desert places. When Bishop Heber was in Upper India in the neighbourhood of Tighri, which is surrounded by a deep jungle, he was told there were many wild animals, such as hogs and deer, in the district. He then asked if there were any tigers, and was answered in the affirmative. His informer then went on to say that there was a very wonderful thing in the neighbourhood, for they had two holy men who lived where the tigers most abounded, and yet neither of them was ever molested by the animals, while one of them actually every night had a visit from a tiger, which licked his hands and fondled him for hours.

The good Bishop, interested in this tale, made further enquiries about it, and was told that the fakir was a very old man, with a long white beard and grey hair, and that his dwelling was a little hut among the long grass, not far from the roadside, and that there were people who had been there at night, and seen the holy

man and the tiger together. The Bishop came to the conclusion that the story was a true one ; for he says in his "Diary," "It certainly is not unlikely that a man with no other occupation or amusement might very thoroughly tame a tiger's whelp so as to retain a hold on its affections, and to restrain it while in his presence from hurting others, even after it had arrived at its full growth and fierceness."

Fakirs differ very greatly in their characters and ways of life. Not all are of the meditative, austere, or self-denying temperament. The majority it is considered are mere loafers, who travel about from place to place simply to take life easily by living upon the bounteous alms of the people, who are usually very ready to give to the so-called saints, that they may obtain their blessing and the merit which is believed to accrue from almsgiving. As well as being beggars, it is thought that many of these fakirs are thieves and robbers and worse.

The poor people of India have a great dread of these vicious fakirs, and render them assistance even more from fear than from love. Coopooswamey, in his account of "Everyday Life in South India," says, in his chapter on Pilgrimages, that as he and a party of friends were driving past a country market-place, his aunt called out, "'See those impudent fakirs, how they snatch and take by force what they want from the baskets of the poor women!' We looked out and saw an ugly, dirty, half-naked beggar, his face, breast and arms smeared with ashes ; his long hair all matted, and tied in a knot above his head ; his wallets slung on his shoulder, and an oval

vessel made of half a gourd in his hand, taking some fruit, vegetables, and grain from the baskets of the women. Most of his victims struggled with him, seized his hand, or thrust him aside, trying to prevent him taking too much; but no one hindered him altogether from getting something."

The fact is, the more ignorant amongst both Hindus and Mohammedans stand in mortal fear of these holy men, whose curses are supposed to be specially efficacious in bringing disasters upon the unfortunate people who offend them. The Rev. J. Ewen, of Benares, in his "Sketches and Stories of Native Life," tells a very good story of how he offended a fakir and yet survived his curses. Mr. Ewen says: "I was walking in the garden one morning when a *fakir* entered and asked me if I would give him a few flowers. 'Certainly,' I said, never dreaming to what use he was to put them, and I never thought of asking him. I supposed he wanted them for the same reason as I myself would ask for a flower—because of their beauty and fragrance.

"On the following morning he called again, and made a similar request. 'Are those withered I gave you yesterday?' I asked. 'Oh, yes, I offered them to the god,' he replied. When I heard this explanation I said, 'You cannot have any more. I cannot give you flowers as an offering to an idol.' He seemed surprised, and began to threaten. 'You will give me no flowers! Very well, I shall curse your garden. I shall curse every plant. They will die, and your garden will become a jungle.' 'Oh,' I said, 'you had better be off, if you are to use threats!

They are of no avail. They do not frighten me, for I am not a Hindu; and certainly I will not consent to take abuse. Be off!' Away he went; but as he left he cursed the ground, he cursed the trees, he cursed me and mine. The natives who heard him looked very frightened. They expected it would all take place. It happened, however, on that particular morning there were quite a number of buds ready to burst, and on the following morning the garden was like a sea of glory. The bushes were covered with flowers. The natives smiled, shrugged their shoulders, and, let us hope, lost faith in fakirs' curses."

If these lazy mendicants consent to work at all for their living, it is in a very curious fashion. I remember seeing certain of the community carrying a framework which contained jars of sacred water from the Ganges or the Jamna or the Nerbudda. Of this precious fluid they sell a few drops at high prices to rich people far inland, who sprinkle their idols with it. Thus the fakirs accumulate quite a store of silver coins, which they soon spend, however, in questionable pleasures, and in giving feasts to their less fortunate brethren.

Another way in which some of the fakirs raise money is by escorting, as they travel about, some sacred animal such as a monkey, a cow, or even a snake. Miss Cumming, referring to this in her book on India, says: "I was much attracted one day by a beautifully sleek little dwarf cow, adorned with a head-dress of peacocks' feathers and decorations of crimson cloth embroidered with lucky cowry shells; she wore ornamental anklets of brass, and a brass bell

hanging from her neck. Another picturesque saint was leading a very handsome white bull, similarly adorned with brass bells, coloured cloth, and gay worsted tassels; but in addition to his crown of peacocks' feathers, a yak's tail was so arranged above the hump on his shoulders as to form a waving plume." The people, touched with the devotion of the fakirs to their sacred animals, supply the former lavishly with what they want—viz., money.

At different periods of Indian history, fakirs, who are always a public nuisance, have caused serious trouble in the State. In the days of the Emperor Arungzebe a vast host of these mischievous vagabonds formed themselves into an army, and attacked and defeated the Imperial troops, and made the Great Moghul tremble on his throne. Ultimately they were put down, however, with a strong hand. Then, in the days of Warren Hastings, the English had a terrible struggle with certain fakirs who, coming from the fastnesses of the Himalayas, and banding themselves together in companies of two or three thousand, swept like a torrent through Bengal, burning, destroying the villages, and committing unnumbered horrors wherever they went. Five battalions of troops were sent against them, but failed to put them down. Then the Governor-General took the field in person against them, but he fared very little better than his generals; for the fakirs evaded the troops, and went on with their plundering and murdering until they had gathered together an enormous booty, when they as quickly departed as they had come, and disbanded themselves, much to the relief of the East India Company.

Nowadays, though occasionally fakirs may be found in bands of five hundred strong in certain parts of the country, they content themselves with begging, or at the worst with surreptitiously appropriating the goods of the people through whose towns or villages they pass. The British Government rules with too strong a hand for the saints to dare to proceed to open violence, however much they might like to.

Strange to say, India has known women fakirs as well as men, though there are comparatively few of the former now. A native writer says, "It is now rare to see a woman who has renounced all pleasures, all property, all society, and all domestic affections, pass from city to city with a vermilion spot on her forehead, a cloth of dull orange on her body, a long trident in one hand, and a hollow gourd in the other. Hindu female ambition is not exercised now to distinguish itself by a public life of abstinence, but by the qualities which fit a woman to be the companion of man." Let us hope that it will always be so.

It is in vain we try to find out how many fakirs there are at the present time in India. An immense number, there can be no doubt. Some estimate that there are probably a million or more of them. What an encumbrance such a host of non-workers, of beggars, must be on the land! The public opinion of India needs educating on the subject. The people need to be shown the evil of promiscuous, thoughtless almsgiving, and how sinful it is to encourage any class of men in idleness who are well able to earn their own living.

The Gospel of Christ is needed in India, as well for the bodies as the souls of the people, as well for their

material as their spiritual welfare, for the Gospel teaches us that true saintliness lies in holy living, in active living, in self-denying living, for the good of others ; and that if a man will not work neither shall he eat. The Gospel teaches us that health, prosperity and happiness come not through a life of ease and idleness, but through faithfully and diligently serving our generation according to the will of God.

ASCETIC AT THE TEMPLE OF KALI, CALCUTTA.

SACRED BULL MYSORE.

III.

SACRED COWS AND BULLS.

THE bull is the most sacred animal of Hindu mythology. He is called Nahadeo, the little god. The Hindus say that when Brahma created the sacred caste of the Brahmins, he at the same time created the cow to afford sustenance by its milk to man, and to supply clarified butter for the burnt offerings which man should present to his creator. The cow is called, moreover, the mother of the gods.

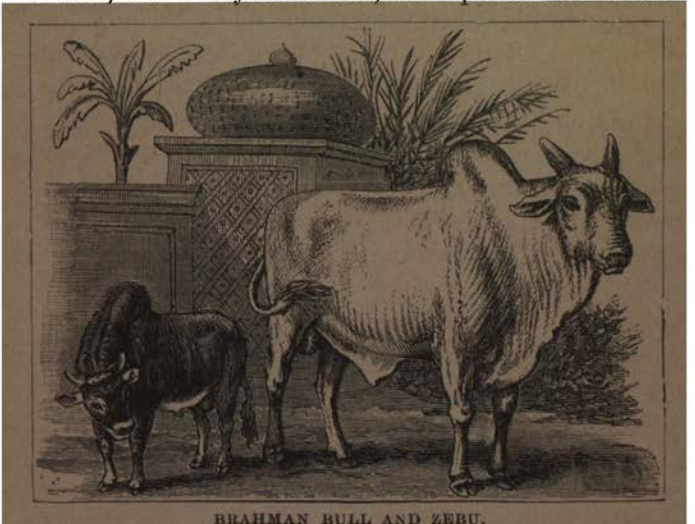
So sacred have cows and bulls become in the eyes of Hindus that they consider their slaughter a greater crime than parricide, and years ago this offence

against [illegible] was punished by death. No orthodox Hindu will eat beef at the present day, and he imagines that never in the history of his race has such an unholy thing done. However, facts are against such a supposition, as has been clearly shown by various writers, and notably by Dr. Rajandralala Mitra, a learned Bengali.

This writer, in his book entitled "Indo-Aryans," has a long and interesting chapter on "Beef in Ancient India." Let me just quote the opening words of the chapter, which run :—"The idea of beef as an article of food is so shocking to the Hindus that thousands over thousands of the more orthodox among them never repeat the counterpart of the word in their vernaculars, and many and dire have been the sanguinary conflicts which the shedding of the blood of cows has caused in this country. And yet it would seem that there was a time when not only no compunctious visitings of conscience had a place in the mind of the people in slaughtering cattle, when not only the meat of that animal was actually esteemed a valuable article of diet, when not only was it a mark of generous hospitality as amongst the ancient Jews to kill 'the fatted calf' in honour of respected guests, but when a supply of beef was deemed an absolute necessity by pious Hindus in their journey from this to another world, and a cow was invariably killed to be burnt with the dead."

Dr. Mitra supports these statements by copious quotations from ancient Hindu writings, and puts the matter so clearly and forcibly that one would think even the most bigoted would be obliged to confess

that the killing of cows and bulls, whatever it may be considered now in India, was not at one time regarded as a crime. However, superstitions die hard in the East, and Dr. Mitra has failed to convince his countrymen as a whole of the error of their ways ; for almost universally the belief is still tenaciously held, that it is now, and always has been, an unpardonable sin to



BRAHMAN BULL AND ZEBU.

slay for any purpose one of the most sacred of animals.

Many explanations have been given of the introduction of this curious belief into India. Dr. Mitra thinks that it was the general teaching of the Buddhists shortly before the birth of Christ, on the sacredness of all life, that first led the Hindus to give up their beef-eating tastes, and make cows and bulls sacred animals, and their destruction a crime. This

may be the true explanation of the custom; but I incline to another which I have heard propounded by thoughtful students of the question.

I have heard it stated that the frequency of terrible famines in India was the real origin of the veto that was put upon taking the lives of cows and bulls. It is said that the wisest of the forefathers of the Hindus, afraid that in times of famine the starving people would eat all their cattle, and thus leave themselves absolutely without those useful animals of produce and labour, saw no way to prevent the disaster except by investing the valuable animals with a religious character, and treating their destruction as an impious, sacrilegious act. So the command went forth from the priests that thenceforth the life of a cow or a bull was equally as precious as, or more precious, in the eyes of the gods than the life of a human being.

However, be the explanation what it may, it is certain that for hundreds if not thousands of years the Hindus have regarded their cattle with great reverence, and have treated as blasphemous the mere suggestion that a cow or a bull should be killed for any purpose whatever, save now and again to be offered in sacrifice to such bloodthirsty goddesses as Bhowani and Kali, whose divinity might excuse the otherwise monstrous and unpardonable deed.

Not only are cows and bulls held in great reverence in India, but they are actually worshipped as gods. Especially at one season of the year, on what is supposed to be the anniversary of the creation of the first cow, the worship of the sacred animal is very general. No image is used, but the worship is per-

formed in the cow-house before a jar of water. At another season of the year the milkmen paint the horns and hoofs of their cattle yellow, and bathe them in the river, after which they do pooja to them—that is, worship them. Persons strict in their religion actually worship the sacred animal every morning immediately after performing their own religious ablutions. The form of worship is to throw flowers at the feet of the cow, and feed her with fresh grass, all the time saying, "O Bhuguvutee! eat! eat!" Then the worshippers solemnly walk round the animal three or seven times, and make obeisance to her.

The Rev. S. Mateer, in his valuable work entitled "Native Life in Travancore," gives some interesting information about cows and their worship by royal personages. He says: "The worship of cows, especially at the time of death, is a favourite one with the Hindus. Baka Bhai, widow of the last Rajah of Nagpore, spent twelve hours daily in the adoration of cows, the tulsi plant, the sun, and her idols. When her end was at hand, five cows were introduced into the room where she lay, in order to be bestowed on Brahmins. The gift of the animal was accompanied by a further donation in money, and as one after another the cows passed onward from the bedside, they were supposed to help the dying woman forward on her way to heaven. Among the last acts of her life, was to call for a cow, and having fallen at its feet, as far as her now fast waning strength would allow her, she offered it grass to eat, and addressed it by the venerated name of mother."

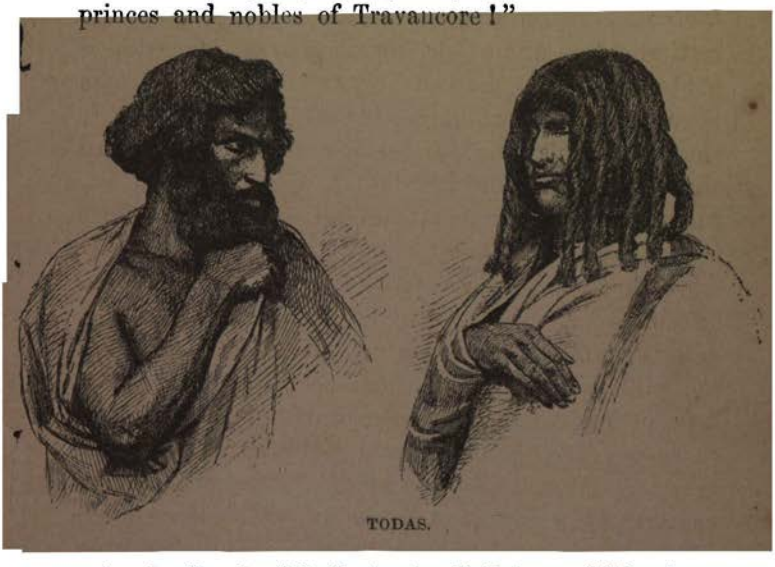
It is generally understood that the Maharajahs of

Travancore, though renowned princes who have descended from an ancient line, are yet originally, and therefore still, in the matter of caste, Sudras; that is, members of the lowest caste. However, that the reigning princes may have due honour and respect paid them even from the people of every caste in their dominions, the priests, Mr. Mateer says, have instituted a curious custom in association with a golden cow, into the body of which each Maharajah must enter, as soon as possible after his accession to the throne, and when the ceremony has been performed the prince is regarded as "born again."

This curious ceremony is as follows:—"The golden cow is partly filled with holy water, to which are added the five products of the cow; and into this His Highness enters, after many preliminary observances, and remains a few minutes. When he comes out again he is recognised by the people as 'the prince born of the cow,' and is regarded as highly elevated in caste, sanctity and honour, fully consecrated and crowned and authorised to reign over his people. He can no longer partake of food along with the members of his own family, who remain in their former status, and he may have the honour of being present at the meals of Brahmins." The golden cow, when broken up, becomes the magnificent perquisite of the priests.

What a contemptible affair the whole thing is! Just think of a well-educated prince like the Maharajah of Travancore submitting to such nonsense! How can any intelligent man think that the mere act of passing through the body of a golden cow can make one iota of difference to his sanctity or greatness!

Mr. Mateer is certainly justified in describing the prince as "a strange mixture of Western civilisation and Hindu superstition," and we can heartily join in his prayer—"May the true enlightenment of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the spiritual regeneration of God's Holy Spirit, speedily save and bless the princes and nobles of Travancore!"



TODAS.

In the South of India in the Neilgherry Hills there lives a tribe of aborigines called Todas. The most striking peculiarity of this very peculiar people is, the absorbing importance they attach to all duties connected with the management of the cow and her chief product, milk. Travellers say that so closely are Todas and cows associated that it is simply impossible to think of one without the other. The Todas are exceedingly kind to their cows, and treat

them as really and truly sacred animals, scarcely touching them with light wands when they wish to guide them, and calling them by pet names which the animals seem to understand and obey with intelligence.

The Todas have one cow in each herd of cattle which they regard with special veneration. It is called the bell-cow, because of a certain bell-idol or bell-god, which is given to it. These bell-cows are not selected on account of their good milking qualities, their size, or beauty, but are the descendants in direct female line from certain originals whose early history has been lost. Colonel W. E. Marshall, in his book entitled "Travels amongst the Todas," says that a priest told him that no matter how old and worthless the bell-cow might become, the bell-idol belonged to her till she died, when without fail it was transferred to her daughter. Strange to say, the bell-god is not worn by the bell-cow except for a few days, but is kept in the priest's house, though it is clearly understood to which cow it belongs.

The same priest gave Colonel Marshall a short account of the installation of a new bell-cow. "Twice a day, morning and evening, for three successive days, the priest waves the bell, with his right hand, round and round the head of the bovine heiress, talking to her the while much as follows:

"'What a fine cow your predecessor was!
How well she supported us with her milk!
Won't you supply us in like manner?
You are a god amongst us!
Let all be well!
Let us have plenty of calves!
Let us have plenty of milk!'"

So taken up are the Todas, both young and old, with their cows, that they think of little else, talk of little else, and care for little else. The tendance of cows, and the worship of cows, have become a perfect passion with them. "Sitting apparently thinking of nothing at all, a man will pick up a bit of cane or forked twig from the ground, and, like the typical Yankee who is supposed to whittle a stick while he speculates, so the Toda will employ himself for an hour at a time, splitting his bit of cane or rounding the little branches of his twig into the likeness of cows' horns, as he muses. Even children may be seen coming in from cattle driving, with strings of these small horns over their arms."

The great usefulness of cows is recognised all over India, and has doubtless something to do with the reverence in which these animals are held. It is quite surprising to learn in how many ways the products of the cow are used in India. To illustrate this point I do not think I could do better than quote a passage from a pleasant story written by a native Christian of India, the Rev. Lal Behari Day. The book is entitled "Bengal Peasant Life."

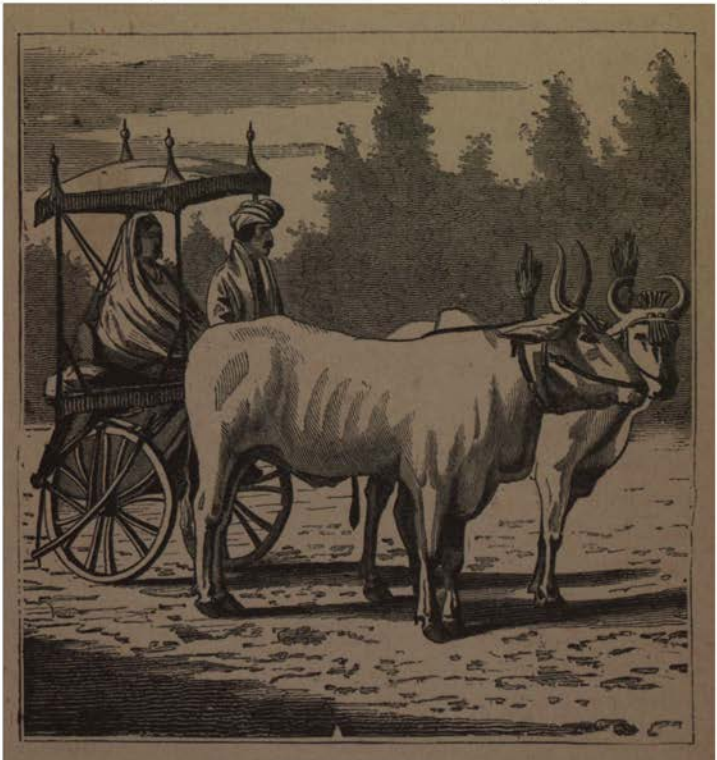
In the chapter on "Household Matters" three Hindu women are brought on the scene, named respectively, Alanga, Sundari, and Aduri, and we are told something about how they spend their mornings in household work. "When the women got out of their beds, which they did always at crow-cawing—I cannot say cock-crowing, for there was no cock, not only in the house, but hardly in the village, as cocks and hens are an abomination to Hindus—they went

to the side of the tank near the house. There they made a solution of cow-dung and water, and sprinkled the liquid by the hand on the open yard, which was next swept by a broom made of the stalks of palm-trees.

"But the rooms and verandahs require to be cleansed and washed in another fashion. As the flooring was entirely of earth, there being not a single brick or stone in the house, or a plank of wood either, every inch of the floor of every room was besmeared by means of a piece of rag, with the said solution of cow-dung and water, and allowed to dry itself. The reader may think that this is a dirty business, and that the rooms must be the worse for being thus besmeared. But he is mistaken. He may take our word that the floor greatly improves by the process. It becomes smooth and glossy, and no cracks are visible. And as for any disagreeable smell, there is nothing of the sort—the smell, if any, being positively pleasant. Hindu peasants besmear their cottages with a solution of cow-dung and water, because cow-dung is regarded ceremonially as a purifier. It is, however, a question why Hindu law-givers should have pitched upon cow-dung as a purifier. Has it any sanitary value? Has it any disinfecting property? From the universal practice of the Hindus of Bengal I should be inclined to think that cow-dung was a disinfectant; but I prefer to leave the matter in the hands of doctors and chemists.

"But the women have not yet done with cow-dung. There is a large heap of it lying in a corner of the yard, partly obtained from the cow-house, and partly

collected the previous day by Gayaram, whose business is not only to tend the cows but to collect whatever cow-dung he may find in the fields, either from his own cows, or from those of other people, and a



ZEBU CARRIAGE.

basketful of which valuable substance he every evening brings home on his head.

"Towards this heap of dung, Alanga, Sundari, and Aduri proceeded. They put a little water on it,

kneaded it as a baker kneads his dough; and each went with a basketful to the sunny sides of the walls of their huts, and covered them with cakes made by the palms of their hands. These cow-dung cakes, when they become dry, are of great use; they are the only fuel of the family. From year's end to year's end the people do not buy firewood; for cooking, and for keeping a fire in the cow-house, they use no other fuel than what is afforded by the cow."

Thus we see to the Bengal peasant the cow is the most useful of all animals as well as the most sacred. Mr. Day, in summing up the advantages of this quadruped, says: "The cow supplies the newly-born infant with food for some years; the cow, or rather the bull, tills the ground on which the raiyots' food grows; the cow brings home on its back that food when it is ready from the fields; the cow furnishes the peasant-family with the only fuel they have; the cow provides the peasant with curds, sour milk and whey; and the cow gives that *ghi* or clarified butter which is so grateful to the palate and nostrils of Hindu gods and Bengali Babus. After this, is it to be wondered at that the cow should be greatly respected by the Hindus?" The pity is, however, that gratitude should degenerate into worship!

In the Mahabharata, the great epic poem of India, there is a story told of a most wonderful cow, called Nandini. As the Hindus believe the tale and hold the memory of Nandini in very special regard, I will relate the extraordinary incidents of her career. It is said that Nandini, cow though she was, could talk and reason and work all kinds of miracles. She was

the property of a famous rishi or saint, named Vashishta, who lived in a dense forest far from the dwellings of men. Now to the abode of this venerable saint, there came one day a king and his suite, who had been out hunting deer and wild boar in the forest, and had got lost, and who, when they were almost ready to sink with exhaustion, espied the dwelling place of the poor fakir. The good old man received his unexpected guests with deep salutations, offered them water to wash their feet, and bade them welcome to his humble home.

But where was food to be obtained for such a company? The saint appealed in his perplexity to his wonder-working cow, who had never yet failed him in the hour of need. And, according to the story,

> "The Cow, from whom all plenty flows,
> Obedient to her saintly lord,
> Viands to suit each taste outpoured.
> Honey she gave, and roasted grain
> Made sweet with flowers and sugar-cane.
> Each beverage of flavour rare,
> And food of every sort, were there;
> Hills of hot rice, and sweetened cakes,
> And curdled milk, and soup in lakes.
> Vast beakers flowing to the brim
> With sugared drink prepared for him;
> With dainty sweetmeats, deftly made,
> Before the hermit's guests were laid."

We can quite understand that the king and his courtiers were filled with astonishment at the marvellous deeds of the saint's cow. Indeed, nothing would satisfy the king but the possession of the valuable animal, so he proposed to buy it from the

fakir, offering him ten thousand ordinary cows in exchange for it. The saint quietly answered "No!" But the king still pressed the matter, saying, "If nothing less will satisfy thee, take my kingdom in exchange for thy cow." But the holy man replied that he did not want a kingdom, but desired merely to be left in peace with his beloved animal, Nandini.

Thereupon the monarch waxed wroth, and in his anger repaid the saint's hospitality with unkingly threats, and ended by declaring, "I will take thy cow even by force." The rishi, being of a peaceful disposition, said simply, "As thou wilt, O king." It was one thing, however, to talk of taking away Nandini, and another thing to do it; for the faithful cow was not disposed to leave her master, and when the attendants of the king laid violent hands upon her to drag her away, she showed them what mettle she was of.

Breaking from her captors the fair Nandini raised her head and neck high in the air, and became terrible to behold. Then she ran at the king and his suite, and scattered them right and left. And when they attacked her with their whips, her eyes became red with anger, and her whole person, as the Hindu historian says, became "like unto the sun in his mid-day glory." Then the enraged animal turned on her tormentors again; and from her tail, which she lashed in fury, there came forth showers of burning coals which effectually put the strangers to rout. The whole band except the king fled ignominiously, and left Nandini master of the field. Thereupon the king was so surprised with the valour as well as other

virtues of the cow that he declared there was none like her in the universe, and that she and all her kind ought to receive the homage and worship of mankind throughout all ages. The king, the story adds, gave up his kingdom, remained in the forest, and became a fakír or saint like the master of Nandini.

A striking peculiarity of the cows, bulls and bullocks of India, is a great fleshy hump between the shoulders, a part of the animal which obtains great favour with Europeans in the East, as it is a close-grained and very delicate meat. This hump seems to be a providential arrangement, like the hump of the camel, and acts as a reservoir of food; for in times of famine it has been noticed to shrivel up slowly before the rest of the body showed any signs of emaciation or suffering.

As cattle are very generally used in India as beasts of burden, a yoke laid across the necks of a pair of bullocks is kept in place by their humps. The drawback to this arrangement, however, is that as the poor animals pull by the hump, and not as in other countries by the head, the hump is often terribly galled. The Hindus, notwithstanding their religious regard and veneration for their cattle, cannot be said to treat them very kindly. Though they consider it a sin to kill sacred cows or bulls, they do not hesitate a moment to overload them or to work them to death.

Miss Cumming, in her book on India, speaks of the cruel overloading of cattle which she saw in the hill station of Simla. She writes: "One poor bullock sank exhausted near our windows, and was of course left to die. We would fain have had it shot, but no

one dared touch the poor sacred creature. All we could do was to carry water to it in a brass basin; but it was too ill to drink. Next morning it died, and the first passer-by threw its carcase down the Khud. Meanwhile eagles, kites and vultures had assembled in a great body on the hill above us. We watched them perched in a row, expectant, till apparently one gave a signal, whereupon all swooped down simultaneously. In ten minutes only the carcase remained, picked quite clean, and the bones were finally polished by swarms of ants." Thus, as a rule, fare the sacred cattle of India—they are literally worked to death.

But though the majority of the cows and bulls of the East are treated as beasts of burden, and have hard times of it, a few fare better, owing to a singular custom of letting loose on special occasions, usually on the death of a worshipper of Siva, one or two of the sacred animals, which are given up by their owners, and allowed to roam for life about the country according to their own sweet will. It is believed that in some way the setting free of a bull on earth secures the happiness of the dead in heaven.

Bishop Heber refers to this remarkable custom in his "Diary." He writes: "A very handsome and sleek young bull, branded with the emblem of Siva on his haunches, was grazing in the green paddy. He crossed our path quite tame and fearless, and, seeing some grass in Stowe's hand, coolly walked up to smell at it. These bulls are turned out when calves by wealthy Hindus on solemn occasions, as an acceptable offering to Siva. It would be a mortal sin to strike or injure them. They feed where they choose, and devout

persons take great delight in pampering them. They are exceeding pests in villages near Calcutta, breaking into the gardens, thrusting their noses into the stalls of fruiterers' and pastrycooks' shops, and helping themselves without ceremony. Like other petted animals they are sometimes mischievous, and are said to resent with a push of their horns any delay in gratifying their wishes."

I remember when in Benares seeing numbers of these favoured animals, for they are as plentiful in the North-west as in Bengal. Indeed, all over India they are to be found; and their numbers have become so excessive, and their depredations so great, that the municipal authorities have begun to take measures to suppress them as a public nuisance. In some places these sacred animals, or Brahmini Bulls, may now be seen yoked in conservancy carts removing the city refuse, or drawing water to irrigate the public gardens. Owners may not like the new state of things, but they can take no steps to prevent this wise use of strong animals. By dedicating them to a god their right in them has been transferred to him. Should they maintain that they are still their property, they may called upon to pay very heavy bills for the destruction they have wrought to standing crops and flower gardens. As a result of this dilemma, the original owners are obliged to regard what they consider the desecration of the sacred cattle in silence.

Between the Moslems and the Hindus there has been a long-standing quarrel, a quarrel of centuries with regard to sacred cows and bulls. While the Hindus will not kill cattle or eat beef, the Moslems

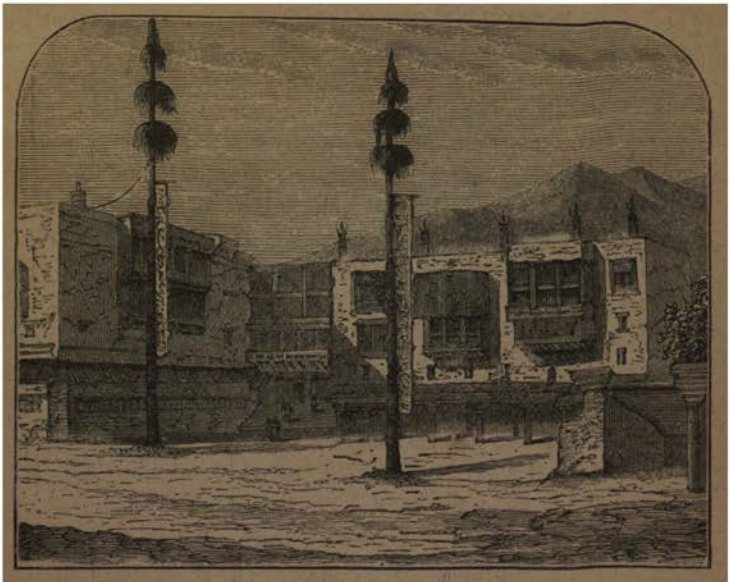
will. On the other hand, the followers of Mohammed will not slay pigs or eat swine's flesh. The slaughter-houses of Moslems in Hindu towns and cities are a constant source of annoyance to the Hindus, and are provocative of strife. The Hindus even say that the Mohammedans are not content with killing their own cattle, but that they place a tempting bundle of grass at the slaughter-house gates at dusk, and wait till a cow or bull attacks it, when they make a rush, drive it in, close the gates, kill it, and sell it next day in open market.

There have been many serious riots between the followers of the two religions, even of late years, on this very question, and it requires a great deal of watchfulness, at certain seasons of the year, on the part of the authorities, to keep the peace. In the past Hindus have, in times of war and victory, defiled Mohammedan mosques with the blood of slain pigs, and the Mohammedans have retaliated by killing cows, and smearing the Hindu temples with the blood of the sacred animals. And if the opportunity arose, I am afraid they would do so again. It is pitiable to think that a difference of opinion with regard to the sacred character or otherwise of certain animals should lead human beings to commit acts of violence on each other and sacrilege on their respective places of worship.

It just remains for me to say that the sacred bull of India is found in the form of statues outside the temples of Siva, it being the animal on which the god is supposed to ride when he wishes to make a journey. These carved bulls, of all sizes, can be bought from

the traffickers in sacred symbols, whose booths or stalls are in all the chief cities of the land. I have two or three carved images in my possession which I obtained in Benares.

The sacred animal is also engraved on brass lotas or water-vessels, and on many of the copper trays used for temple offerings. And the Brahmin ostentatiously telling his beads will be found to have the holy bull embroidered on the bag which contains his rosary. And I have seen paintings which represent human beings as holding on to the tail of the sacred animal, which is piloting them through the sea of sin, and across the river of death to the golden shore. Thus we see that the sacred cows and bulls of India, whether in the flesh or in the form of images, are held in the highest reverence. We have read in history of the apis or bull which the ancient Egyptians worshipped, and of the golden calf which the Israelites once worshipped for a brief season in the wilderness of Sinai. Is it not curious, and sad withal, to think that the old idolatrous custom exists to-day amongst the Hindus in the land of India?



BUDDHIST CONVENT IN TIBET.

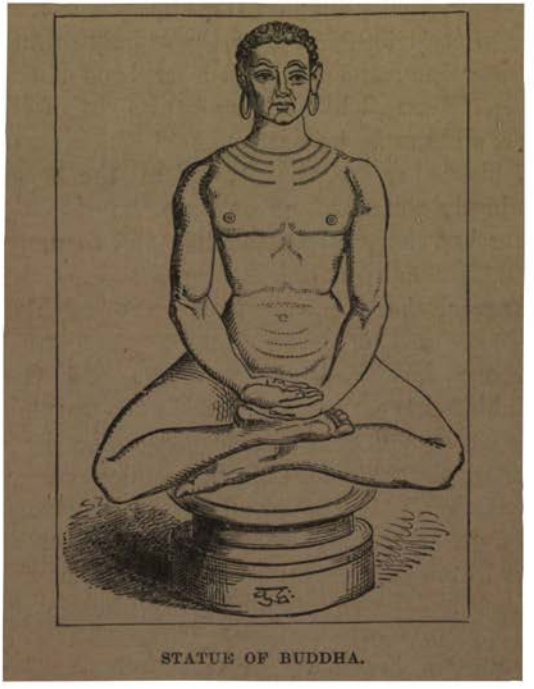
IV.

BUDDHIST PRAYER-MACHINES.

ONE of the most curious religious practices that I noticed in India was that of using prayer-machines, or, to speak more correctly, praise-machines, for Buddhist prayers nearly always take the form of ascriptions of praise to the founder of their creed, the noble-minded Prince Gautama, also called Buddha or the Enlightened One.

Buddha is believed to have been born about 600 B.C. of the royal house of Kapilavastu, a country in Northern India. His father designed him to be a

great warrior and conqueror, as his ancestors had been before him, but the young prince shunned all warlike pursuits, and even the rough sports of his companions, and preferred to study religious books, and to meditate on the grave and solemn aspects of human life. The



STATUE OF BUDDHA.

king, disappointed with these peaceful and retiring habits of his son, sought to win him to more worldly things, and a more practical career, by marrying him to a beautiful and talented princess. For a time it seemed as if this scheme would answer; for Gautama took his charming bride into the brightest society of

the gay court, and gave himself up to a season of pleasure, and sought in the delights of the world to banish from his mind the puzzling questions of the inner meanings of human life, which had so greatly exercised and distressed his spirit for some years.

However, the strong cravings of the soul of the young prince triumphed over the merely surface joys of society life; and one day, after his feelings had been deeply stirred by the sorrowful sight of old age, disease, and death, he resolved to leave his wife and child, his father and friends, and all the honours of his princely state, and go out into the wide world to seek for knowledge of human life, and to unravel, if he could, the mystery of human existence.

This resolution of the abandonment of earthly pomp and power and of loved friends, was carried into effect one dark and gloomy night, and Gautama found himself on the road outside the royal city of his forefathers a homeless beggar. The Buddhists call this remarkable deed of self-sacrifice, "The Great Renunciation." Gautama, after travelling some distance from home, made friends with two Hindu fakirs in the Patna district, who taught him that the path to knowledge and tranquillity of soul lies in the subjection of the flesh.

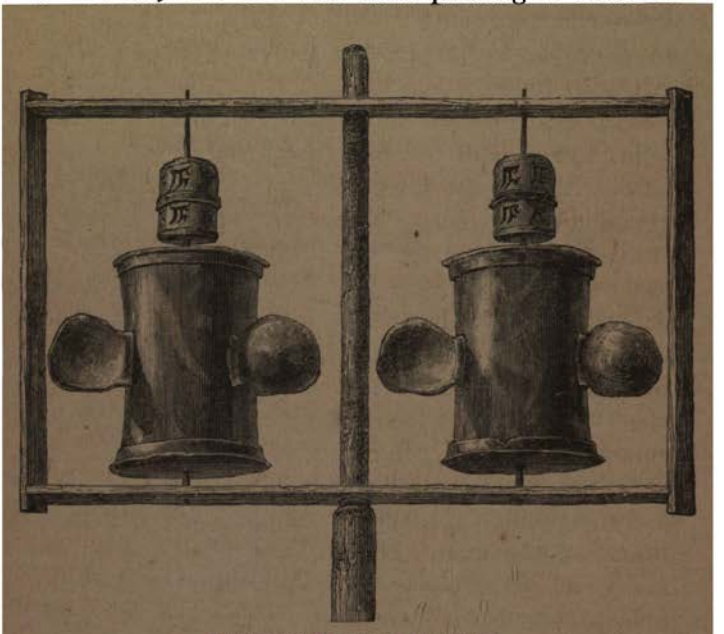
So the prince became a fakir, and, retiring into a desert place called Gaya, he practised all kinds of cruel austerities on his person in a mountain cave. Five strangers are said to have joined him, who in time became his disciples and imitated all his fastings and scourgings. For six years this painful life of austerities continued; but Gautama became no happier

in mind, nor more contented in spirit. Torn with doubts and fears as to whether, after all his sacrifices and self-torture, he was not missing the secret of life, his physical strength gave way, and he fell in a swoon to the earth. When he again awoke to consciousness he found a great change had taken place in his feelings and convictions, and he felt that the path of salvation lay not in fastings and other penances, but simply in living a holy life.

Full of this new conviction Gautama made it known to his five disciples, who, however, were grieved and vexed with him for his change of views, and retired from him in disgust. Thus once more the prince was left alone, and the Buddhists then say that he had a fearful struggle with Maya, the spirit of evil, while meditating under a Bo-Tree at Gaya, in which he came off conqueror, and earned for himself the name by which he is known now to the whole world—viz., Buddha the enlightened, the wise, the one whose eyes had been opened to eternal things.

Two months after the "new birth" at Gaya, Buddha began his public ministry at Saranath, or the Deer Forest, near Benares. His words were addressed both to the rich and the poor, to the learned and the unlearned, and were received by many as a divine revelation. As the inspired man spoke of holiness and righteousness, of self-control and self-denial, the common people at any rate heard him gladly, and he speedily gathered around him a band of devoted followers. When he had sixty disciples, many of whom were women, he started on a missionary tour throughout Northern India, urging his countrymen to

forsake idolatry, to give up the selfish customs of caste, and to live pure and saintly lives. It is pleasing to learn that his five early friends the fakirs, who had forsaken him at Gaya, returned penitently to his side, and became his most enthusiastic and devoted adherents; and it is still more pleasing to find that



BUDDHIST PRAYER-MACHINE.

eventually his father, his wife, his son, and all the members of his princely family, became converts to the new faith, called Buddhism.

Buddha lived to a good old age, and to the very last was a preacher of righteousness to the people of India. His parting words to his weeping followers

were—"Work out your salvation with diligence. Be earnest, be thoughtful, be holy. Keep steadfast; watch over your hearts. He who holds fast to the law and discipline, and faints not, he shall cross the ocean of life, and make an end of sorrow." After the death of Buddha his religion spread over Northern India, and was carried thence to other countries, such as Burmah, Ceylon, Siam, China, Japan, Thibet, Nepaul, Mongolia, and all Central Asia, right up to Siberia and Lapland, and at the present time it is the faith of five hundred millions of human beings.

The secret of Buddha's wonderful success, as Sir W. W. Hunter has said, was in the fact that he brought spiritual deliverance to the people. "He preached that salvation was equally open to all men, and that it must be earned not by propitiating imaginary deities, but by our own conduct. His doctrines thus cut away the religious basis of caste, impaired the efficiency of the sacrificial ritual, and assailed the supremacy of the Brahmins as the mediators between God and man. Buddhism taught that sin, sorrow, and deliverance, the state of man in this life, in all previous, and in all future lives, are the inevitable results of his own acts. He thus applied the inexorable law of cause and effect to the soul. What a man sows he must reap."

This teaching is good as far as it goes; but I would ask my young readers to notice that in the Buddhist religion nothing is said of God. We are not even sure that Buddha believed in or taught the existence of a personal God; and it is certain that nowhere in the sacred books of Buddhism is God referred to, as

He is in our Bible, as the great and loving Being to whom man is accountable for his deeds, who in Christ Jesus will help man to overcome his besetting sins, and who will, after life here is ended, receive redeemed man into the eternal felicity of heaven. What the Buddhists look forward to is *Nirvana*, which is believed by many to be annihilation, the blowing out, as it were, of the soul like the flame of a candle.

It is very strange that though India was the cradle of Buddhism, it is one of the few countries of the East where that religion does not now flourish. Hinduism, with its false gods and corrupt creed, proved too mighty for the godless, yet much purer, religion of Buddhism ; and the followers of the latter creed were, in course of time, either forcibly converted or driven out of the country; and at the present day there are not more than a few thousand Buddhists in Hindustan, and these are to be found in the mountains on the frontiers of Nepaul and Thibet.

Darjeeling, the hill sanatorium of Bengal, a day's railway journey from Calcutta, and 7167 feet above the sea-level, is the nearest place where Buddhists can be met. More than once I visited that charming hill resort, and was delighted with the magnificent scenery of the district of mighty forests and eternal snow. But I found the people of Darjeeling—the Buddhists of the town and neighbourhood—even a more attractive study than the grand scenery; for their religious faith and manner of life were so different from those of the Hindus and Mohammedans of the plains.

And what specially attracted my notice were the curious religious symbols, or aids to worship, referred

to in the title of this chapter—viz., prayer-machines, about which I would now write. From the sketch I have given of the life and doctrines of Buddha my young readers will now be able to follow with intelligent interest what I have to say of the way or manner in which many of the Buddhists engage in the religious exercise of prayer or praise.

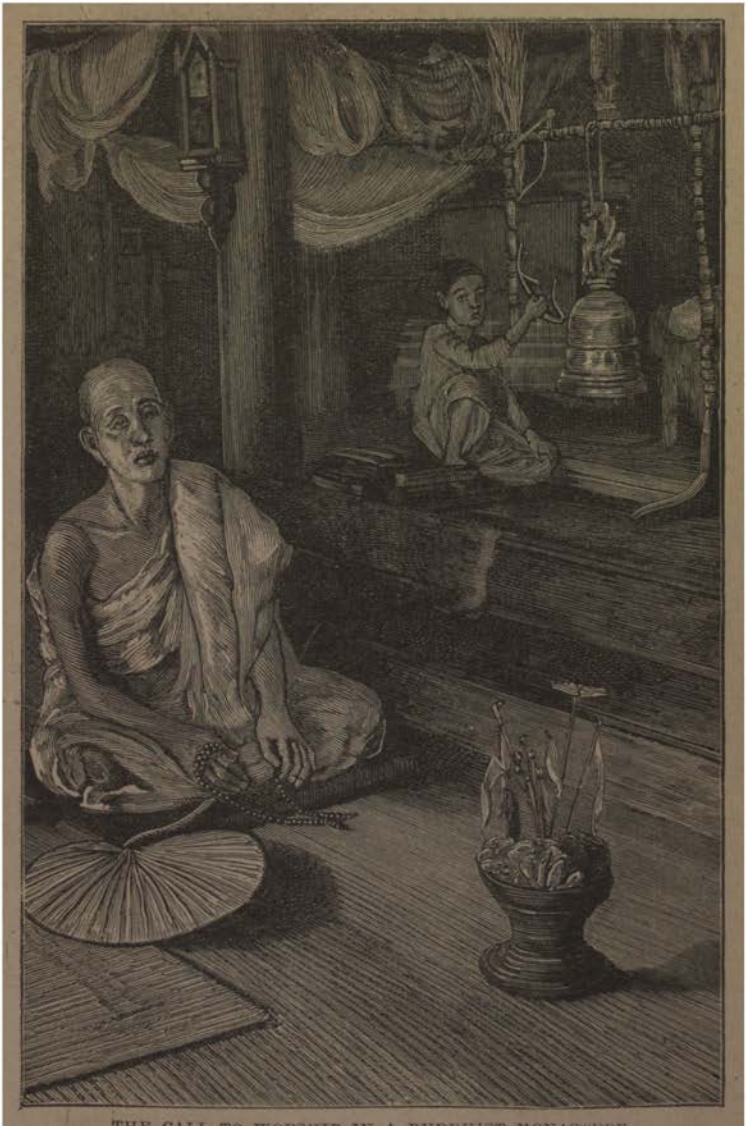
Strange as it may seem, it is a fact that the Buddhists of Darjeeling, of Thibet, and other places, employ what are called prayer-wheels, or cylinders, in their religious devotions. These machines are of various kinds—viz., hand-wheels, house or temple-wheels, wind-wheels, water-wheels, and another variety called prayer-flags, which are affixed to the top of high poles, in the neighbourhood of dwelling-houses, temples, or on high hills where they may be seen by all.

The use of these wheels can be traced back, so the Buddhists say, for at least one thousand four hundred years. They are believed to have originated from the notion that it is an act of merit and a cure for sin to be for ever reading or reciting portions of the sacred writings of Buddha. But as many people of the poorer classes were unable to read, it came to be considered sufficient for devotions to turn over the rolled manuscripts containing the precious sayings. This convenient substitute was found to save so much time and trouble, that the learned as well as the unlearned adopted it; and instead of reading the manuscripts which contained the writings of their great teacher, the people generally were to be seen contenting themselves with merely rolling and un-

rolling them. And even this method of honouring their teacher or prophet or lord became irksome in time, and prayer- or praise-wheels were invented, which simplified matters greatly.

A hand prayer-wheel is a little round box or cylinder, of either brass, copper, or silver, about three inches in length by two and a half in diameter. Ascriptions of praise to Buddha are closely written on strips of cloth or paper, and are tightly rolled round a spindle about six inches long, of which one half, which is left bare, forms the handle. The upper half of the spindle, which is covered with the cloth or paper, is enclosed in the cylinder. From the middle of the cylinder hangs a chain with a small lump of metal at the end, which, when the prayer-wheel is twirled round on a pivot, gives the necessary impetus to the little machine, so that it revolves without the slightest exertion, and goes on grinding any given number of prayers.

It is a very common thing to meet men in countries where these prayer-wheels are used, walking along the road, or going about their work, carrying and incessantly spinning round and round the pretty little playthings I have described. At Darjeeling I saw it done every day during my visit. And the men who did it thought that they were really praying to and worshipping the "Lord Buddha," though no word might move their lips, nor thought exercise their minds. It is a mechanical contrivance to save trouble, and it is expected that Buddha will take the will for the deed. I have said that inside the little prayer-wheels are strips of cloth or paper on which are



THE CALL TO WORSHIP IN A BUDDHIST MONASTERY.

written ascriptions of praise to Buddha. The same words, it may be added, appear also on the outside of the cylinder in embossed characters. Miss Gordon Cumming speaks of a prayer-wheel in her possession on which was written a short but very comprehensive prayer in Thibetan, a prayer for the six classes of living creatures according to Buddhism—viz., the souls in heaven, the evil spirits in the air, men, animals, souls in purgatory, and souls in hell.

The wheels in my possession, and wheels in general, however, contain what is known as *the six-syllabled charm*. All worship, as a rule, begins, continues and ends with the sentence, Om Mani Padmi Hom. These words are raised in embossed letters, perhaps a dozen times on the outside of the cylinder, and are closely written, perhaps many hundred times, on strips of paper inside. There is considerable diversity of opinion as to the meaning of the words Om Mani Padmi Hom. Dr. Rennie, in his "Story of the Botan War," translates the sentence, "Oh, the jewel on the lotus!" Dr. Hooker renders the words "Hail to him of the lotus and jewel!" And Miss Cumming gives the meaning of the sentence as follows: "Om, equivalent to the Hebrew Jah, the holiest and most glorious title of the Almighty; Mani, the jewel, one of Buddha's titles; Padmi, the lotus; Hom, equivalent to Amen." Accordingly, if we accept the last interpretation, which seems likely to be the true one, the people who use the prayer-wheels are addressing Buddha as "The Almighty, the Jewel on the Lotus, Amen."

And this prayer or charm is the sovereign balm for

every conceivable evil. By many no other prayer seems to be known or thought of. Om Mani Padmi Hom is repeated thousands, and tens of thousands of times, by every worshipper. Thus we can understand what our Saviour meant when He said, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking." Some of the little hand prayer-wheels are very pretty, and some are even inlaid with precious stones. There was one I saw, made of silver and inlaid with turquoise stones, which I coveted; but it was very dear, and I had to be content with two brass wheels. However, there was this consolation: the silver prayer-wheel was evidently made for sale to travellers, while the commoner brass ones were what the people had used in their daily devotions. In some parts, Buddhists have the greatest reluctance to sell even the ugliest old wheels or mills. They cling to them, one writer says, as we do to our dear old Bible.

When I bought my hand prayer-wheels, the man who sold them showed me the right way to use them. There is a right, and there is a wrong way. The right way to twirl the wheels, it seems, is sun-wise, from east to west; and if even by the merest accident they are turned the other way, the results will be very disastrous. This belief accounts in many cases for the reluctance to sell. There is not merely the charm of association, but a dread lest a careless hand should turn them against the sun, and so change the past acts of merit into positive sin.

All Buddhists are not able to buy hand prayer-wheels, cheap as the common ones are, and so for the

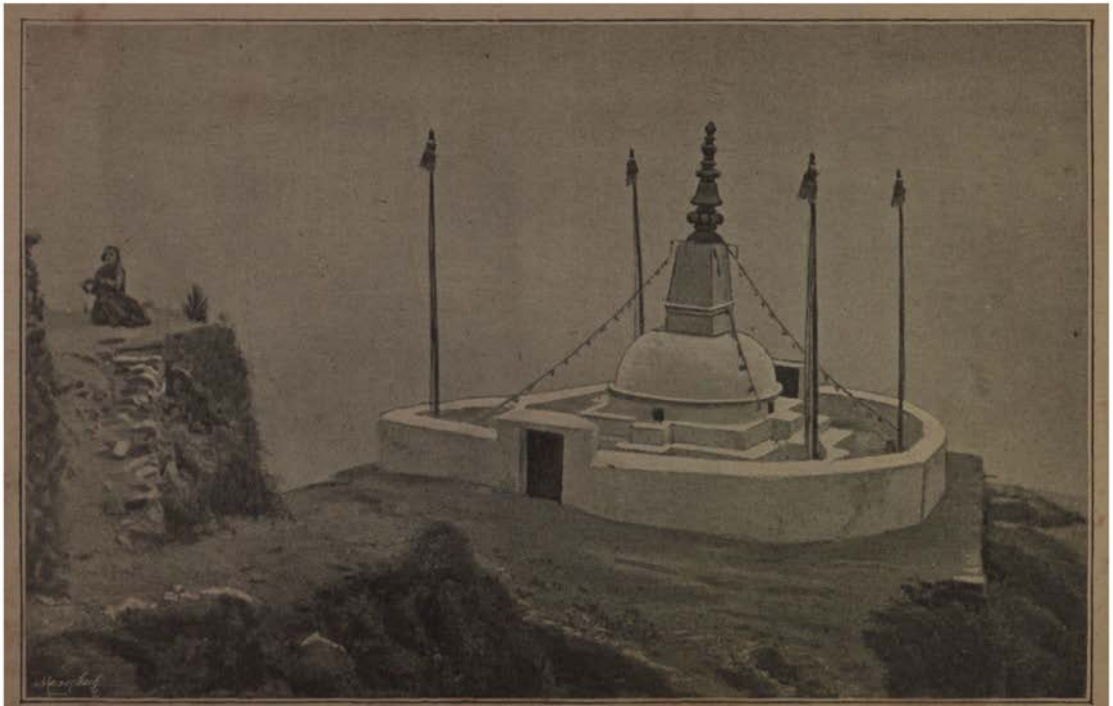
very poor, *house- or temple-wheels* have been instituted. These are great egg-shaped barrels, full of prayers, a cord being attached to the base of the barrel, which, on being pulled, sets the cylinder twirling like a child's whirligig. These are erected at the doors of dwelling-houses and in temples, so that those who do not possess the luxury of a hand-wheel of devotion, may not lose their chance of heaping up merit. Every man going in or out of the house or temple may set the big wheels spinning for his own benefit and that of the inmates. It is a simple contrivance, and the simple people are content with it, and the prayers of the head of a family seldom rise above the mechanical act of twirling round an old barrel a few times a day. His wife and children, as well as himself, are, he believes, benefited by such a deed. It is a sad thing to learn, is it not, that men can form such a low ideal of prayer; that human beings can conceive that the One whom they look upon as their Divine Lord, could be satisfied with His people mechanically pulling a prayer-wheel, in place of offering the conscious adoration of their lips and their hearts?

In the neighbourhood of Darjeeling there are two or three Buddhist temples which contain prayer-wheels, and these I visited. The largest was a medium-sized building, made of wood and thickly thatched, and would hold perhaps fifty people. There was a very low upper story inhabited by the lama or priest and his servants, accessible by a stone staircase at one side of the building. The main body of the temple is the room in which is kept an image of Buddha. This room is entered through a small transverse vesti-

bule, the breadth of the temple ; and it was in this vestibule I found the prayer-wheels.

On the right hand there were ten wheels or barrels, about one foot in height, arranged in a row, and so lightly poised that when one of the attendants ran his hand along them, they were all set spinning in a moment. Another attendant began to ring a big bell to rouse Buddha from his forenoon sleep, while another set six barrels on the other side in motion, and still another began pulling a cord attached to an enormous wheel, which was the chief attraction of the temple. It was about five feet high, and three feet in diameter. Om Mani Padmi Hom was inscribed on the outer case, and the same sentence was to be found inside repeated innumerable times. As this great barrel slowly revolved on its axis, a musical bell marked each revolution, and the worshipper was accredited with having repeated the sacred words just as often as the bell rang. The big barrel was the devotion store of the neighbourhood, and men from far and near came every day to have a pull.

The general arrangement of a Buddhist prayer-wheel temple, when you pass through the vestibule into the main room, is very much like that of an ordinary Roman Catholic church. "There are divers small altars, with images of saints and vases of flowers, and incense burning before each image. All around the walls are mythological paintings, especially one fair saint riding on a tiger, which recurs frequently. On one side sits a grand gilt image of Buddha, calm and contemplative, his throne, as usual, edged with lotus leaves. Before him is set a low table, whereon



BUDDHIST TOPE, OR SACRED MONUMENT, DARJEELING; WITH PRAYER-FLAGS.

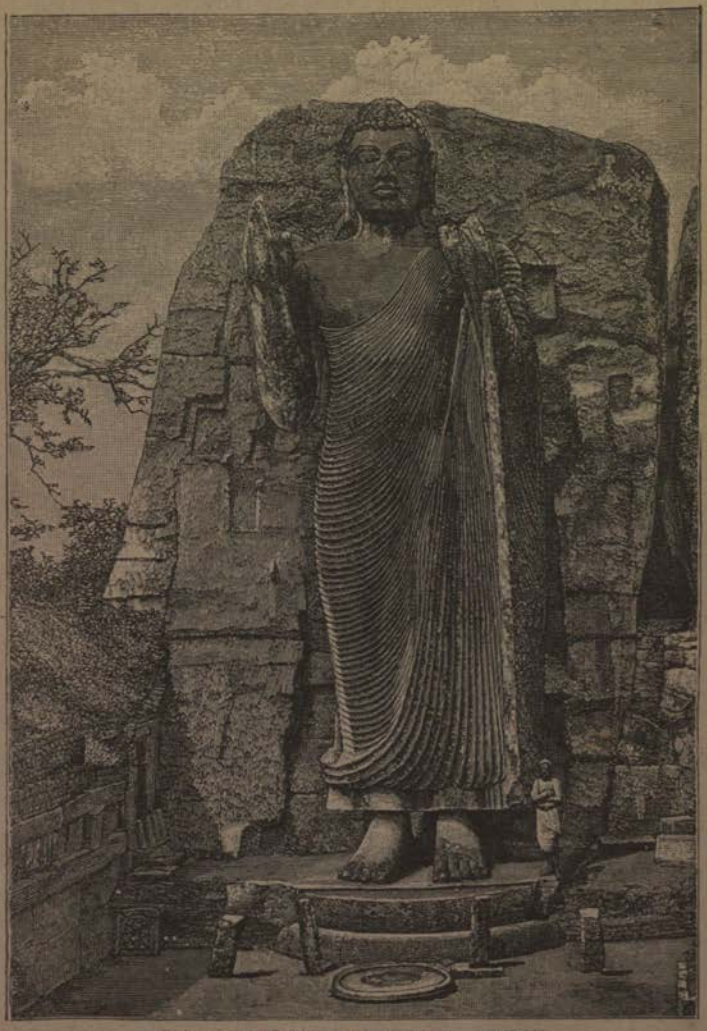
are placed many small cups of water, tea, flour, milk and butter. These and wild flowers are the offerings brought by worshippers, to whom animal sacrifices are forbidden." And it is to gain the favour and blessing of Buddha, whose image is in every temple, that the prayer-wheels in the vestibule are pulled. It was a comical and yet a sad sight to see our servants pulling away with untiring industry, while the priest or lama showed us round the temple. We were forced at last to beat a precipitate retreat; for the whole place was so dirty and had such a bad smell that we could not remain. It was a relief for more than one reason to get into the open air, and look up into the bright heavens, where we knew dwelt our Father, who desires not to be worshipped by mere form and ceremony, but "in spirit and in truth."

In addition to hand prayer-wheels, and house or temple prayer-wheels, there are *wind-* and *water-wheels*. The wind-wheels are so constructed as to go round obedient to the action of fanlike wings, and are erected usually on mountain tops, where they will constantly catch the breeze. The water-wheels are large cylinders placed upright in a shed built over running water. A spindle, passing through each cylinder, terminates in a horizontal wheel, having the cogs turned diagonally to the water. Sometimes several of these water-wheels are placed in a line across a stream; and thus day and night thousands and tens of thousands of prayers are offered up, whereby the people obtain unlimited stores of merit without any trouble or expense, except the first labour

and cost of erecting the wheels. The device which has enlisted the breeze and the mountain stream in multiplying never-ceasing praises to Buddha is certainly an ingenious one. Then in the neighbourhood of temples there are usually to be seen what are called *prayer-flags*, which are of great length, but only about a yard in width, on which are to be found ascriptions of praise offered on behalf of the dead. These flags are affixed to lofty poles; and, as they flutter in the breeze, it is believed by devout Buddhists that the words of prayer or praise are wafted on the wings of the wind into the ears of their lord.

Just think that for the last thousand years or more this kind of folly has been perpetrated! We cannot but acknowledge the ingenuity and the poetic grace of prayer-wheels, but still their use can only be characterised as folly. We may be pleased and amused for the moment as we see men twirling the wheels round in the street, or pulling them at the door of a house, or in a temple, or causing them to revolve in the breeze or in the water; but when we think at length, and soberly, of what the whole thing means, surely our hearts are grieved that any of our fellow-creatures should be so foolish and superstitious as to think that prayer offered in such ways could be acceptable to the Divine Being they desire to worship!

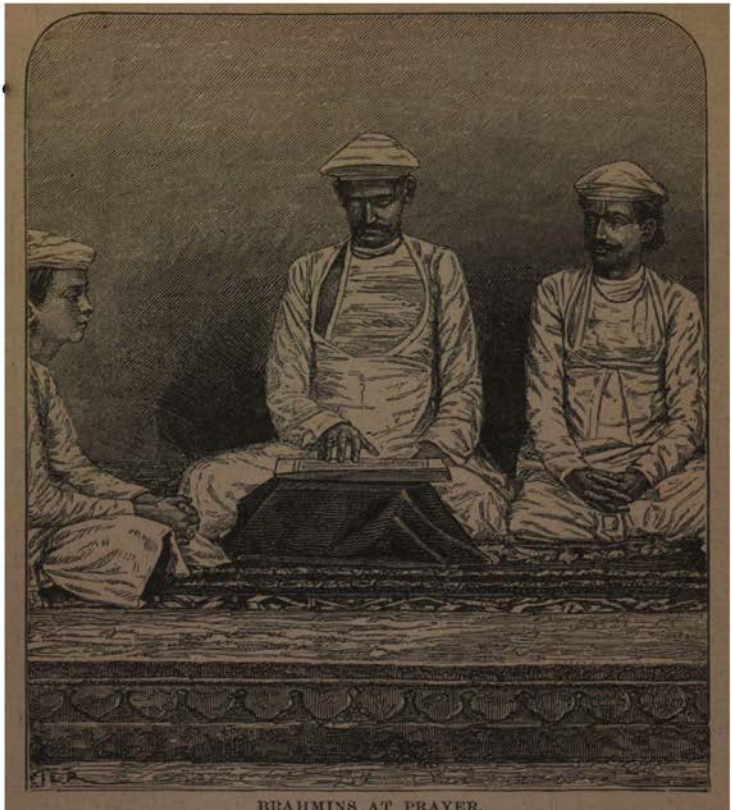
Thank God, Christian missionaries are labouring amongst the Buddhists of many lands, and are imparting unto them the teaching of Jesus Christ on prayer as on every other duty and privilege of the Christian calling. I am sure my young readers join me in the earnest desire that our Buddhist brethren, instead of



COLOSSAL FIGURE OF BUDDHA, CEYLON.

twirling round in a cylinder, Om Mani Padmi Hom, may ere long be heard repeating with their lips, because they accept with their minds and hearts, the beautiful prayer, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

BUDDHIST PRAYER WHEEL



BRAHMINS AT PRAYER.

V.

EASTERN PROVERBS.

I HOPE my young readers are interested in proverbs; for they are, as Lord Bacon has said, "the genius, wit, and spirit of a nation." In all probability a glance at the proverbs of the East will help us to understand the people of India, by

throwing sidelights upon their feelings and convictions, as well as upon their manners and customs.

A writer in Chambers' *Encyclopædia* remarks truly that "From the earliest historical times, proverbs have been household words, not merely among the people at large, but among the greatest and wisest of men. The prodigious amount of wisdom and good sense they contain, the spirit of justice and kindliness they breathe, their prudential rules for every stage and rank, their poetry, bold imagery and passion, their wit and satire, and a thousand other qualities, have, by universal consent, made them the most favourite mode of imparting hints, counsels, and warnings."

The same writer, in speaking of the origin of proverbs, is inclined to think that the majority even of our European proverbs have come from the East, and have been handed down from the remotest antiquity. He says: "From the East they were for the most part imported into Greece, thence to Rome, and from thence they were scattered all over Europe, and partly brought back again, slightly altered, to the East. Even certain Jewish proverbs quoted by Christ and the Apostles, which hitherto did not seem to offer any analogy in other languages, might be traced back to India, where they had existed for many long centuries before they found their way into the popular speech of Palestine."

Yes, there can be little doubt that the East is the original home of the world's proverbs; and this thought should make our study of the proverbs of India all the more attractive. One of the most striking traits of

Eastern life is the hospitality of the people, and this sentiment or virtue has found expression in a very worthy proverb which says, "The tree does not withdraw its shade even from the woodcutter." By this is meant that a man must show hospitality to foes as well as friends if such should claim hospitality from him. "The tree does not withdraw its shade even from the woodcutter." A householder has to be "no respecter of persons," according to the saying, "Straw, room, water, and gentle words are never to be refused in good men's houses." An Indian poet has declared,

> "Prosperity dwells on his floor
> Who cheerfully doth tend
> His guest, and ever proveth true
> His liberality."

This sentiment is like to that expressed by Solomon in that proverb of his which says, "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The universal interest taken in marriage in India is hit off in the common proverb, "Tell a thousand lies and promote a marriage." Every Hindu marries; for the wedded state is considered essential as well for personal comfort as for the general welfare of society. It is considered a disgrace for a woman not to have a husband; so that parents are in a constant state o anxiety and unrest until they have got their daughters supplied with partners in life. Unfortunately, lying is not considered a disgrace, except when it is exposed; and consequently much intrigue and deception take place in the preliminary marriage arrangements. The people of India seem to think that "all is fair in love

and war"; and so they say to one another, "Tell a thousand lies and promote a marriage." It is just an Eastern application of the unrighteous Western proverb which asserts that "the end justifies the means."

Friendship is a subject that has given rise to many proverbs in India as in other countries. The Hindus say, with rather a poor opinion of human nature, "There cannot be friendship between a poor man and a rich man"; and again, "Time that impaireth everything impaireth friendship also." The following saying is more just and wise:

> "Keep clear, though in thy house they smile,
> From friends who out of doors revile."

I like also the proverb, "Adversity is the touchstone of friendship"; and this also is a shrewd remark, that "a false friend is like a pot of poison with a surface of milk"; but perhaps best of all is the grand saying, "There is one friend, even religion, who will never forsake us."

With regard to "bad company," there is a proverb which declares, "Avoid evil companions; for a piece of charcoal if it be hot burneth, and if cold it blackeneth the hand." It is equivalent to the Apostolic saying—"Evil communications corrupt good manners." According to a Hindu rhymester,

> "Join the vile, and vile you'll be
> In the eyes of those who see."

Or to put it another way,

> "If you stand where you ought not,
> Why be shocked when shame is got?"

Poverty is something that the people of India, even though there is so much of it in the land, perhaps because there is so much, look upon with abhorrence. The aims of the people, and the very dreams of the people, are for wealth, without which life is considered scarcely worth living. Yet how few obtain wealth! The proverb of Solomon finds expression in India from countless lips, and in very nearly the same words—"The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty." The Hindus say of poverty,

> "It brings no happiness in this,
> And for the world to come no bliss."

Is it not a dark saying? How much better is the teaching of Christ who bade the poor strive to be content with such things as they had, and who held forth at least a future recompense of reward in the beautiful words, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."

There is much wisdom in the string of proverbs which I shall now give, and they need no explanatory comment: "As rain to the parched field, so is meat to one oppressed with hunger." "Knowledge produceth humility." "Show fortitude in adversity, and moderation in prosperity." "The knowing man is the strong man." "Good fortune is the offspring of our endeavours." "Gentle lips provoke no scorner." "When you ask for counsel, take it." "Alms are the salt of riches." "Helping neighbours help them truly." "Every door may be shut but death's door."

Then I have collected also a series of proverbs

which have been expressed in poetic form. These also speak for themselves.

"Who wish their house a house to be,
Must live from idle follies free."

"Like elephants when arrows shower
The great are firm in ruin's hour."

"When comes the fitting moment rare,
What's hard to do, do then and there."

"Think, then resolve: 'tis credit none
To say 'Let's think,' when work's begun."

"If but wisdom fill his mouth,
What concerns his age or youth?"

"Will the lamp become less bright
If an infant hold its light?"

"Riches, like a woman's charms,
Fly away like ghostly forms."

"If at first you fail to rule,
Do not think to rule at all."

"Stubborn folks are always wrong—
Can you straighten puppy's tail?"

"Wash a bear-skin every day,
Will its blackness go away?"

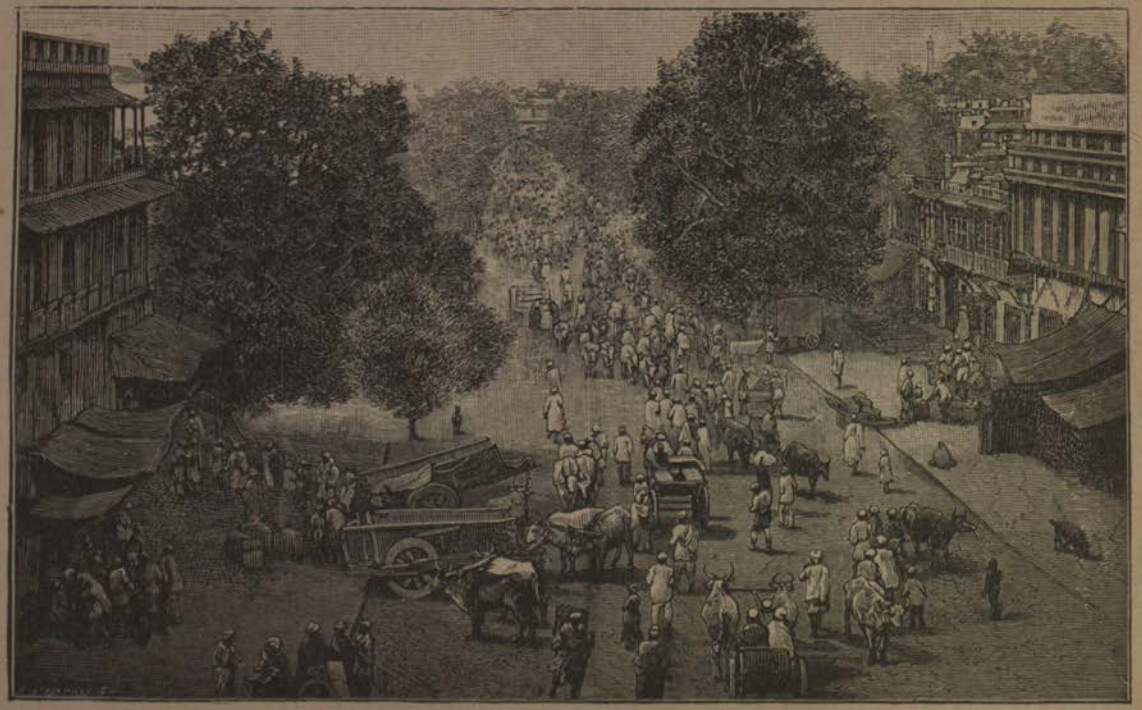
"Talk is easy, virtue hard,
We may teach yet not regard."

Now let me illustrate, by a story or two, some of the most famous Indian proverbs. There is one on *generosity*, which had its rise in the lavish liberality of a Mohammedan emperor. The proverb is, "As generous as Kuttub." This prince ascended the throne of Lahore, in the year 1205. He was the

founder of the dynasty of the Slave Kings, and was the first Moslem monarch who from choice established his capital city in India. Kuttub was a born soldier, and victory attended his arms from one end of Hindustan to another. He was also the builder of the wonderful tower of Delhi, called the Kuttub Minar, which is one of the wonders of the world. Sir William Sullivan, writing of this prince, says: "Kuttub possessed in its greatest perfection, the Eastern virtue of generosity. Long before he ascended the throne he was celebrated as 'the bestower of lakhs,' and for centuries after his time, when a prince was marked for his liberality, his subjects said, 'He is as generous as Kuttub.'" Generosity has always been admired in the East by Hindus as well as Moslems, and it is a common saying amongst the former, that "To feed the hungry and the poor is a nobler deed than to sacrifice to the gods."

There is another Moslem proverb very common in Northern India, which runs, "Delhi is still far off." I have explained the derivation of this saying at considerable length in my book entitled "Studies in Mohammedanism," in the chapter on proverbs, to which I would refer all who are interested in this subject. Suffice it to say here, that "Delhi is still far off" is equivalent to the English proverb, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

The wisdom of "minding one's own business," or, as the Hindus say, "Meddle not, suffer not," is very often in native circles illustrated by the story of "The Washerman, the Dog, and the Donkey." The tale goes, that a certain dhobie or washerman, who



STREET SCENE IN DELHI.

made white the clothes of a large village, procured a donkey to carry the clothes, and a dog to guard his house. It happened, one night, that six burglars attempted to break into the dhobie's house, and though the dog heard them he did not bark. Thereupon the donkey remarked, "O dog, why are you so lazy? Robbers are come, and are lurking about to rob our master's house." "Let them do as they please," replied the dog, "for on former similar occasions when I have barked and aroused our master, he has not seemed particularly grateful. Anyway, it is no affair of yours, my dear friend."

But the donkey thought differently, for he stood up on his legs, and, after saying, "I will call and rouse the master," he began to bray like thunder. The robbers heard and were afraid. The washerman heard and was angry. But still the donkey continued his braying in hopes that his master would arise and chase the robbers. The washerman arose truly, but it was to belabour the poor animal for his well-meant but mistaken zeal. "O fat donkey, take this and this!" said the exasperated dhobie, as he brought down a stout stick savagely on the animal's back.

The donkey stopped his braying; the washerman resumed his sleeping; and the robbers, after waiting a little while, broke into the house, collected all the clothes and valuables, and stole away with them. The dog then spoke to the bruised and crest-fallen donkey, and said, "O ass, though I told you you would not hear. Did the master thank you for your interference? Your sore back is the result of meddling in what does not concern you. I am the watch-dog

of this house, and if for weighty reasons I do not choose to bark, it will be well for you to keep your braying to yourself, lest in the future a worse thing befall thee. Meddle not, suffer not!"

There is another Eastern proverb similar to this, which, however, carries the thought of non-interference to the extreme. Is there a sadder proverb in any language than the following, which is common in India, though it had its origin in Egypt—viz., "Do no good, and thou shalt find no evil." What a terrible experience of the dark side of life must have prompted the use of the phrase at the first! It speaks of hard usage, of bad treatment, of kindness unreturned, of that hope deferred which makes the heart sad and sometimes bitter. There is an Indian folk-tale which bears on this subject, and which shows exactly what the people mean by saying, "Do no good, and thou shalt find no evil." I extract the story, not word for word, but substantially, from the Rev. J. Ewen's book on India, entitled "Sketches and Stories of Native Life." It is as follows:—

In the depth of an Indian winter, a Hindu on a journey was passing through a forest: he was very cold, and, seeing numerous twigs lying about, gathered up a bundle and lit a fire. Indian fashion, he sat down, brought his knees up on a level with his chin, put his arms over them, and spread out his hands. Just when beginning to feel and appreciate the warmth, he thought he saw one of the lower twigs move. Looking more intently he found the twig was in reality a snake, which, being stiff with cold, he had mistaken for a branch of a tree. The snake almost

instantly cried out in pain, saying, "Take me out of the fire, good man, I am burning all over." The Hindu, being of a compassionate nature, obeyed the request, and even went so far as to take the snake down to the river-side, where he dipped it a few times in the cool water, and then laid it gently on the bank.

Such an act merited a kind return; but to the surprise of the traveller, the serpent spread out its hood, and, with its eyes glaring, said, "Now, my friend, I am going to bite you." "Bite me!" exclaimed the man in amazement. "Bite me! Why, I have only just saved your life, and now you talk of biting me." "Certainly," replied the snake, "and in so doing I am only following the custom of humanity. Do you not know that the world always returns evil for good?" "No! no! that is not true!" cried the Hindu. "Yes, but it is true!" retorted the snake; "and if you doubt my word, let us ask the first animal we meet." "Agreed!" said the traveller, and the man and the snake journeyed together along the dry dusty road. They had not gone very far, however, ere they met a stranger advancing, leading a cow by a halter. The cow was very old, and very weak; so weak that its legs were bending under it, and its knees rubbing each other. Its hide was almost hairless, and every bone could be traced through it. Altogether, it was a pitiable object.

"Ask this cow," said the snake. "O cow," exclaimed the Hindu, "will you be good enough to tell me whether you have found this statement true, that the world always returns evil for good?" "Ah, yes! Alas, it is only too true!" replied the cow.

"Listen! Once I was a young cow: now I am old. I have had quite a number of calves in my time. They are growing up, ploughing the land, carrying water and drawing carts; indeed, they are the humble slaves of men. In my time I have given a great deal of milk. With it men have fed their children, and made butter and ghee. Now that I am a poor old cow, and can do no more for them, they forget my services, refuse to feed me properly, and wish me dead. Is not that returning evil for good?"

The Hindu, gravely impressed with what he had heard, yet said he would like further proof; so he and the snake journeyed on their way, and had other encounters and conversations with objects animate and inanimate, who all bore the same testimony that "if we do no good we shall find no evil." Convinced at last of the truth of the proverb, the traveller said, "O snake, thou mayest bite me, only suffer me first to say farewell to my wife and children, who live near by." "Certainly," replied the serpent, "but be quick! I shall stay here till you come back." The man departed with alacrity; but when he told his wife of the promise he had given the snake she wept and bewailed and refused to let him go out of her sight. So together the husband and wife returned to the snake, which was awaiting the arrival of its victim with eagerness.

"One moment, O snake, if you please," said the wife. "When you have bitten my husband, and he has succumbed to your poison, what shall I do with all these children?" "This is somewhat embarrassing, certainly," replied the snake. "You were not by

when I said I would bite your husband, and of course I never thought of you nor the children. But I will tell you what I will do. I have travelled a great deal, and in my travels have discovered a very destructive powder: it is so powerful that if you but put a very little of it on your greatest enemy, he will shrivel up and crumble into dust." "Excellent," cried the woman. "Give me some before you bite my husband!" The unsuspecting snake gave the powder, and as soon as she received it the woman cast it on the reptile, which was reduced to dust, thereby to the end returning evil for good.

This wonderful story is only a folk-tale, of course, but reading between the lines we see how deep-grained is their distrust of each other amongst the people of the East. The cow and the snake are only made to say what the human beings of India think, that all too often kindness is recompensed by unkindness and helpful services by ingratitude. Thus the inexpressibly sad proverb has gained general currency, "Do no good and thou shalt find no evil." It is only fair to say, however, that the people of the East are not as bad as their creed; for very often they do show kindness to each other, and do good in various ways.

I have already called attention to proverbs inculcating hospitality and generous charity. Another kindred saying might be mentioned, which declares that "the sandal tree perfumes the axe that fells it." Sandal wood, with its fragrant smell, is much used in the East for boxes, beads, toys, and other articles, and consequently the woodman does not spare the tree. Yet "the sandal tree perfumes the axe that

fells it." Could the doctrines of the forgiveness of injuries and the overcoming of evil with good be more beautifully expressed? As a set-off, and a powerful set-off, against the selfish proverb, "Do no good and thou shalt find no evil," we may place this generous one, "The sandal tree perfumes the axe that fells it." According to the Mahabharata, "Forgiveness is an ornament of the strong, and to do good is the supreme peace."

"Pepper to Hindustan" is a proverb that answers to our English saying, "Coals to Newcastle." The Greeks also say, or used to say, "Owls to Athens." The Jews remark, "Enchantments to Egypt"; the Germans say, "Deals to Norway"; and in the Middle Ages it was a common cry, "Indulgences to Rome!" These variations of the same proverb show us how in both the East and the West the same popular ideas prevail on certain subjects, and are apt to formulate themselves into proverbial sayings.

The Hindus have a shrewd saying with respect to greed, avarice, and the heaping up of riches—viz., that "Nothing but dust will fill the eye of man." The following is utter folly, however—"He who is bitten by a snake may escape, but not he on whom the evil eye has fallen." There is a proverb in India with respect to children which I have not met with elsewhere. Coopooswamey, the author of "Everyday Life in South India," refers to it when he says, speaking of his childhood's days, "Sometimes in the early morning, and especially in the rainy or winter season, when the older people in the house draw their large white sheets closely around them, I used to feel

cold ; but no one took much notice of me. My father would say, 'Children and the legs of a stool don't feel cold'; and he would send me out into the sunshine, telling me that that would warm me."

The tyranny of custom, which is strong in all lands, but which is perfect slavery in India, is well shown in the proverb which says, "We must walk as the village walks," and again in the proverb which declares that "If one lives in a country where all go naked, one must do the same." An orthodox Hindu would as soon think of trying to fly as of daring to be singular in his dress, habits, or rules of conduct. These matters are all arranged by custom; and woe be to the man who asserts his freedom of thought or action. We can see then what courage is required for a Hindu to become a Christian.

There is a popular proverb with regard to looking at all the sides of a question ere deciding on weighty matters, which is specially applicable to hasty, impulsive, or passionate people. The proverb is, "Strike, but hear." It conveys more meaning than the saying, "Think before you speak," though it is akin to it. To an angry father, to a jealous husband, to a suspicious and wrathful king or ruler, the Hindus say, "Strike, but hear." The hope is of course that if the angry person can only be induced to hear, he will, in all probability, not strike at all, or temper justice with mercy.

The people of India dislike changes, and are loth to undertake anything new. They "hasten slowly" in all truth. It is amusing to notice with what evident distrust and suspicion they treat any suggestion of

change. And sometimes it may well be they are wise in so doing; for even our English proverb says,—"Three removes are as bad as a fire." The way the Hindus put the same truth is by saying, "A wise man moveth one foot, but he standeth fast with the other." The people of India "look before they leap," and they "never leap in the dark." This over-cautiousness, however, keeps back the race in "the race of life."

SANTAL WOMAN.

Both good and bad things have been said of women in the proverbs of India. There is a graceful compliment in the proverb which asserts, that "women and roses are the only beautiful things in the world"; but there is insult in the declaration that "a woman is no more to be trusted than a snake in the grass." The alleged talkativeness of women is not spared; for it is a common saying that "a woman's tongue is her sword, and she does not let it rust." Why, even in the home, Easterns will not allow women to assert themselves; for there is a proverb which affirms that

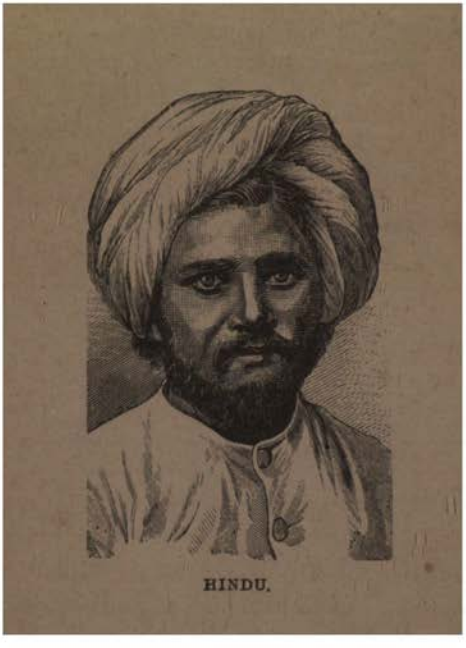
"it is a sad house in which the hen crows louder than the cock." However, a poet has sought to smooth ruffled feathers or feelings by stating—

> "The greatness of the married state
> The wife is, or it is not great."

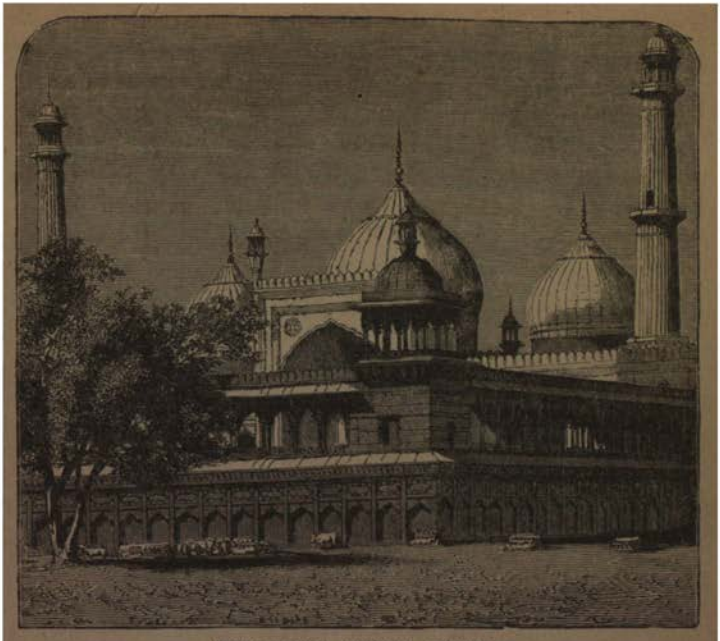
There are two excellent proverbs which are designed to encourage perseverance and patience in any enterprise that may be taken in hand. One is, "Small rain fills a pond at last," and the other runs, "Although a mountain be high it has a road to the top of it." To one who starts difficulties in a very easy thing it is also customary to say, "To eat sweetmeats requires no teeth." A little sarcasm, moreover, is latent in the following remark, "If I do well it will be ascribed to Providence: if ill, to myself."

The proverb "New servants are swift," is true to the life in the East, and is suggestive of our Western saying, "New brooms sweep clean." "Master easy, servant slack," is also a suggestive family proverb. "Trees will not grow unless you scatter seed," is meant to call forth effort, and to stimulate to deeds of kindness. It is a worthy proverb, and one to be kept in everlasting remembrance. But perhaps the most exquisite Eastern proverb I have come across is the following, "To kiss a sleeping child," by which is meant to do a man a favour without his knowledge. In this sense to one and all of my readers I would say, "Kiss a sleeping child; go about doing good in quiet, unostentatious ways, which are known only to your Father who seeth in secret, who some day will reward you openly."

But I must close this chapter, else I shall lay myself open to the charge of exhausting the patience of my readers, and shall be rebuked by a proverb quoted by Archbishop Trench, which says of a too wordy writer—" He leaves nothing in his inkstand."



HINDU.



THE JUMNA MUSJID, DELHI

VI.

THE PEACOCK THRONE.

BEFORE proceeding to tell the story of the famous Peacock Throne of Delhi, which for centuries was the symbol of the Mohammedan power in India, I shall say just a word or two concerning peacocks in general. Peacocks or peafowl are natives of the East Indies, though they are now to be found all the world over. These birds, of course, as we all know, are remarkable for the magnificence of their plumage, and especially for the splendid train,

popularly called the tail, which is capable of being erected and spread out into a great disk. "The blue of the neck, the green and black of the back and wings, the brown, green, violet, and gold of the tail; the arrangement of the colours, their metallic splendour, and the play of colour in changing lights, render the peacock an object of universal admiration—a sentiment in which the bird himself evidently participates to a degree that is amusing, as he struts about to display himself to advantage, and labours to attract attention, affording a familiar proverbial image of ostentation and pride."

The peahen, which is much smaller than the peacock, has no train, and is of dull plumage, mostly brownish, except that the neck is green; but, strange to say, in old age this bird has been known to grow more beautiful, and to assume the plumage of the male. Though born in such a hot climate as India, peafowl can stand any climate; and even in winter in England they have been found sitting on trees, or on the tops of houses or stacks, during the keenest frosty nights. They seem to have a great dislike for the confinement of a roosting-place like other fowl, and prefer to pass all their time in the open air.

Sir James Emerson Tennent, in his work on Ceylon, writing of the peacock, says: "As we emerge from the deep shade, and approach the parklike openings on the verge of the low country, quantities of peafowl are to be found either feeding amongst the reeds and rushes in the long grass, or sunning themselves on the branches of the surrounding trees. Nothing to be met with in demesnes in England can give an

adequate idea either of the size or the magnificence of this matchless bird when seen in his native solitudes. Here he generally selects some projecting branch, from which his plumage may hang free of the foliage, and if there be a dead and leafless bough, he is certain to choose it for his resting-place, whence he droops his wings and suspends his gorgeous train, or spreads it in the morning sun to drive off the damps and dews of the night."

In the neighbourhood of Calcutta, and almost everywhere in India, peacocks can be seen every day moving about in the bright sunshine; and I remember once, at Mirzapur, in the North-west, coming across a score or more in one company, and the sight was truly splendid. In unfrequented parts of the country hundreds have been found together; and Colonel Williamson, in his "Oriental Field Sports," makes the statement that once he saw a company of over a thousand in one place in a jungly district. Let me quote his words, which are, "I speak within bounds when I assert that there could not be less than twelve or fifteen hundred peafowl, of various sizes, within sight of the spot where I stood for near an hour. The woods were covered with their beautiful plumage, to which a rising sun imparted additional brilliancy."

The peacock is truly an aristocratic bird, and for ages in India it has been held in admiration and even veneration, and has been regarded as in some way specially associated with royalty. Sir Edwin Arnold, in "India Revisited," says: "Peacocks are great favourites with the Rajputs. The bird is sacred to their war god Kumara, and its feather was often

carried in the turban of the Ulwar warriors ; and the reason they declare why it screams so loudly when thunder is heard, is because the martial fowl takes the noise for kettle-drums." For all time the peacock will be remembered as the symbol of Moslem imperial power in the East ; for it was on a peacock throne in Delhi that the greatest of the Moghuls sat to rule over Hindustan.

Let me describe the Peacock Throne, and tell the story of the rise and fall of the Moghul empire as associated with it. It is a romance of thrilling interest. The Mohammedans, of whom there are now about fifty millions in India, entered the land as early as 711 A.D., bent on plunder and conquest ; but it was not till the twelfth century that they obtained a permanent footing in India, by the capture of the old Hindu city of Delhi. That was in the year 1193. The hordes of invaders came chiefly through the Afghan passes.

What is called the Moghul empire was founded in the sixteenth century by Babar, a descendant of Tamerlane, the famous conqueror and scourge of the East. The Moghul empire was the most powerful of all the Mohammedan dynasties that have ruled in India, and is the one best known to Europeans. The Moghuls were the paramount power in India from the sixteenth century until our own time, and from them the English wrested the imperial dominion of the East. In January 1628, Shah Jehan ascended the Moghul throne when he was thirty-six years of age, and he it was who erected the present city of Delhi on the ruins of other cities, and who put up most of

the magnificent buildings which are now the glory of Northern India. It was Shah Jehan also who caused to be made the famous Peacock Throne of fabulous price which has been the talk and wonder of the East for ages.

The room in which the Peacock Throne was erected was the most beautiful chamber of the emperor's palace. It was called the Diwan-i-kas or Hall of Private Audience, and was approached through the Diwan-i-A'm or Hall of Public Audience. These rooms were miracles of beauty, and, according to Sir Edwin Arnold, "nothing in Imperial Rome ever exceeded the magnificence of this royal retreat of Shah Jehan." Over one archway in the hall where the Peacock Throne stood these proud words were engraved, and may still be read:

> "If on the earth there be a bower of bliss
> That place is this, is this, is this, is this."

The Peacock Throne was constructed by Shah Jehan as a symbol of his mighty power, and to show off the immense quantity of precious stones he had accumulated from the plunder of Hindu rajas, and from presents he had received at annual festivals from princes and comrades. For a description of the Peacock Throne I do not know that we could do better than quote the words of Mr. Beresford, who, in his "Guide to Delhi," says, "The Peacock Throne was so called from its having the figures of two peacocks standing behind it, their tails being expanded, and the whole so inlaid with sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones of appropriate colours, as to

represent life. The throne itself was six feet long by four broad: it stood on six massive feet, which, with the body, were of solid gold, inlaid with rubies, emeralds and diamonds. It was surmounted by a canopy of gold, supported by twelve pillars, all richly emblazoned with costly gems, and a fringe of pearls ornamented the borders of the canopy. Between the two peacocks stood the figure of a parrot of the ordinary size, said to have been carved out of a single emerald. On either side of the throne stood an umbrella, one of the Oriental emblems of royalty. They were formed of crimson velvet richly embroidered and fringed with pearls: the handles were eight feet high, of solid gold, and studded with diamonds."

This description may serve to give us some idea of the magnificence of Shah Jehan. The Peacock Throne, with its gold framework and ornaments of precious stones, must have been a dazzling object to look upon, and was a most remarkable symbol of imperial power and greatness. The work was done, it is said, under the supervision of a French jeweller, Austin of Bordeaux; who, after defrauding several of the princes of Europe by means of false gems, which he fabricated with peculiar skill, had sought refuge in India in the court of Shah Jehan. The cost of the superb Peacock Throne has been estimated at the vast sum of twelve millions sterling.

It was on this famous throne that the emperors of the East sat to receive princely visitors, and to attend to great and important matters of state. Bernier, a European physician, who travelled in India in the time of Aurungzebe, had more than one audience with

the Great Moghul, and wrote as follows: "The King appeared seated upon his throne, at the end of the great hall, in the most magnificent attire. His vest was of white and delicately flowered satin, with a silk and gold embroidery of the finest texture. The turban, of gold cloth, had an aigrette whose base was composed of diamonds of an extraordinary size and value, besides an Oriental topaz, which may be pronounced unparalleled, exhibiting a lustre like the sun." Thus the Moghuls of India on their Peacock Throne were the observed of all nations, and the envied of the whole world!

There are various anecdotes related in association with the Peacock Throne, which are full of interest. For instance, it was from this throne or from one in the adjoining room that the Great Moghuls dispensed justice as the chief magistrates of the realm. They prided themselves on receiving impartially all applicants, whether rich or poor; and in their way doubtless they tried to strike an even balance in all cases, though sometimes they sought to serve themselves while serving others. Let me give a case in point.

It is said that on one occasion a young man appeared before Shah Jehan declaring that his father was dead, and that his mother had taken possession of the family fortune, amounting to two hundred thousand rupees, and would give no share of it to himself, though her husband had instructed her to do so on his deathbed. The emperor listened quietly to the tale, and, being tempted by hearing of so large a sum of money, he ordered the offending possessor of it to appear in "the presence," when he instructed her to give at once fifty

thousand rupees to her son, to keep fifty thousand for herself, and to hand the remaining hundred thousand over to the royal treasury. At a sign from the emperor the surprised lady was taken from the audience hall, ere she could say a word in opposition to such an extraordinary judgment.

However, the determined woman was not conquered, and next day she appeared before the royal throne again, and coolly said, "May it please your Majesty, my son has certainly some claim to the goods of his father; but I would like to know what relation your Majesty bears to my deceased husband, that you claim part of his estate." Shah Jehan took this plain speaking in good part, admiring the courage of the woman, and to his credit it has to be related that he withdrew his own claim, and ordered the suppliant to depart in peace, and to come to terms with her son by dividing the whole property equally with him. And thus matters were amicably settled.

All disputes in the imperial presence, however, had not such a happy ending. Colonel Sleeman, in his "Rambles," says, "On one of the pillars of the hall of audience is shown the mark of the dagger of a Hindu prince, of Cheetore, who, in the presence of the emperor, stabbed to the heart one of the Mohammedan ministers who made use of some disrespectful language towards him." When the prince was seized by the royal guards, and asked how it was he dared do such a terrible deed in front of the Peacock Throne and in the very presence of his sovereign, he answered proudly and sternly, almost in the words of Roderick Dhu—

"I right my wrongs where they are given,
Though it were in the court of heaven."

We are not told what became of the infatuated man. Truly those were days of lawlessness and dark deeds, and many such awful tragedies were enacted in the audience chamber of the Great Moghul, and on the very steps of the Peacock Throne.

It was in front of the Peacock Throne that the unfortunate but graceful Prince Soliman appeared to receive the doom of unsuccessful plotting against the State. There he stood with his hands bound in gilded fetters, entreating in the most pathetic language to be put to death at once rather than be sentenced to die by slow poison as so many had done before him. It is said that as the prince pleaded, many of the courtiers were affected to tears, and the ladies of the harem wept aloud from behind the marble screens, where they saw and heard all that passed.

It was in front of the Peacock Throne also, in the days of Aurungzebe, that Sivaji, the founder of the Mahratta power of Central India, was openly insulted, though he had been invited to the court in time of peace, and assured of a welcome from the Mohammedan emperor. Sivaji is said to have shed tears of indignation and anger at the discourteous treatment he received, and to have hurled words of defiance and threats of vengeance at the Great Moghul. This gave Aurungzebe an excuse for imprisoning his guest; but the latter was more than a match for the emperor in cunning, and in a short time effected his escape, and lived to do untold harm to the Moghul empire.

But now let us pass by numerous reigns during

which, by internal misgovernment and external dissensions and wars, the power of the Moghuls in India perceptibly declined. We reach the period of Mohammed Shah's rule, one of the most unfortunate of the emperors of the East. It was during this monarch's reign that the terrible Nadir Shah swooped down upon India from Persia, like an eagle on its prey. Nadir carried all before him, and was soon in possession of Delhi, and in the very palace of the Moghuls, sitting on the celebrated Peacock Throne, by the side of Mohammed Shah. It was the fortune of war.

And now notice an incident that happened. Nadir Shah, though master of the imperial city, yet declared his desire to be treated as a guest, and took a pleasure in mocking humbled royalty, by allowing the conquered emperor to preserve an outward show of authority. While the two monarchs sat on the great throne discussing terms of peace, lo! coffee was brought in by an Omrah, the highest lord of the household, who was uncertain to whom he should first offer the fragrant beverage; for he knew that his head would be the penalty for the least apparent slight to either of the monarchs whom he was serving. However, risking everything, the Omrah, with good sense and tact, walked straight to his royal master, and said, as he presented the coffee, "I knew that your Majesty would not allow your distinguished guest to be served by any but your own royal hands." It was a worthy deed, and excited not merely the gratitude of Mohammed Shah, but the admiration of Nadir Shah, who, turning to the emperor, said, "If all your Majesty's servants had known their duty as well as this Omrah,

and done it as faithfully, I should not now be sitting here."

This pleasant scene within the hall of the Peacock Throne is worthy of record; but while it was taking place sad events were going on without. The city of Delhi was given up to slaughter and plunder, and the destruction wrought was terrible beyond words to express. And for a month the sack of the richest capital in the world continued, until the people were literally beggared by the rapacity of Nadir Shah and his soldiers. Nor was the palace of the Moghuls to escape the general pillage.

Notwithstanding the entreaties of the emperor, the signal was given to sack the palace. Even the Peacock Throne was doomed. It became the prey of Nadir Shah himself. What a prize! Surely never did conqueror, in any part of the world, obtain such booty in one small apartment as Nadir Shah obtained in that hall, where he had bandied compliments over a cup of coffee with the poor, unfortunate emperor of the Moghuls! Think of twelve millions sterling in the form of gold and jewels, passing thus in a moment from one man to another as the spoils of war!

There are some students of Indian history who doubt the fact of the plunder of the Peacock Throne by Nadir Shah. They think that it was spared out of compliment to Mohammed Shah, and that it was reserved for plunder at a much later date, and by a different race. For example, Miss C. F. Gordon Cumming writes in her book, entitled "In the Himalayas and on the Indian Plains," as follows: "The wonderful Peacock Throne disappeared after the Mutiny

(1857), and no one has ever found what became of it. The miracle was, that it should have escaped the wholesale plundering which Delhi and the greater part of Hindostan received in 1738, when invaded by Nadir Shah, with a vast army of Persians and Georgians." I think we are now in a position to say decidedly, that the famous throne did not escape Nadir's clutches. I do not think there can be a shadow of a doubt, that the Persian adventurer marched away with it when he left Delhi, in triumph, to return to his own dominions. In a work on "Persia," by Mr. Benjamin, late United States Minister to Persia, I find these words: "Nadir Shah returned to Persia from India with vast spoils, including the famous Peacock Throne, now in the royal treasury at Teheran." A statement like this, by one who knows, should settle all doubts.

It is exceedingly interesting to notice that in the breaking up of the Peacock Throne, in order to its more convenient carriage to Persia, it is generally believed that the Kohinoor diamond, now in the possession of Queen Victoria, was discovered. This precious stone, the Hindus say, was ages ago found in a Golconda mine; and it has, from the time of its original discovery till now, been, with few exceptions, in the hands of the paramount power in India. Nadir Shah, from the brilliancy of the gem, is said to have given it its present name of Kohinoor, which means "Mountain of Light."

After the death of Nadir Shah, who was assassinated in his tent by some of his own generals in 1747, the Kohinoor passed into the possession of the Afghan ruler Ahmed Shah, who plundered the dead monarch's

tents. From Ahmed Shah it descended to his son Shah Sooja, and from the latter it was taken by force by Runjeet Sing, the Sikh chief, familiarly called "The Lion of the Punjaub." On the abdication of Maharajah Dhuleep Sing, and the annexation of the Punjaub by the British in 1849, the far-famed diamond was surrendered to Great Britain, and now, as a native of India has gallantly said, "it glitters upon the crown of the queen of our empire—the first of jewels adorning the person of the first of sovereigns in the world."

When the Kohinoor came into the possession of the English it was an inch and a half in length, and an inch in width, and weighed 794 carats. To increase its beauty it was cut and reduced to 186 carats. "In this state, rose-cut, it was shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and was valued at about £140,000. It was re-cut in 1852, and now as a regular brilliant weighs a little over 106 carats."

But to return to Delhi and the history of the Moghuls! With the destruction of the Peacock Throne the glory seemed to depart from the Moslem empire in India. Mohammed Shah, when the Persians had left his capital, sought to cheer and reinvigorate his disheartened people, and after a while even created another beautiful throne in place of the one taken away, and perhaps in imitation of it. However, the power of the Moghuls steadily waned. In 1777 a dastardly and cruel deed was perpetrated on the person of the reigning emperor, Shah Alum, by Gholam Kadir, a Mahratta chief, who invested and captured Delhi. The conqueror marched to the palace and into the Diwan-i-kas, the Hall of the Peacock Throne, and,

placing himself on the new throne, commanded that the emperor should be brought into his presence, when he ordered him to show where his treasures were concealed. "In vain Shah Alum pleaded the utter poverty of himself and family. The rebel general, incensed at his inability to extract the information, jumped from the throne, knocked down the aged monarch, and, kneeling on his breast, put out his eyes with his dagger, while the poor old man could only murmur, 'Why should I be deprived of those eyes which have been incessantly employed for sixty years in studying the sacred Koran?'"

In 1803 the arms of the British triumphed over those of the Mahrattas, and the emperor at once threw himself on the protection of Lord Lake, who cordially responded to his appeal, and reinstated the aged and blind monarch on the throne of his ancestors. "Eighty-three years of sorrow had passed over his head, and poor, dependent, infirm, and sightless, the head of the empire illustrated in his person the widespread ruin which had overwhelmed the empire itself."

For fifty years after the installation of Shah Alum on the throne of the Moghuls, Delhi enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity under the powerful protection of the British. Then came the sad and terrible days of the Mutiny, when the country was torn with strife from end to end, and when it seemed as if the star of the English, which had been in the ascendant, would go down in darkness. The Moghul once more ruled absolutely in the halls of his fathers, and treated the few British within the walls of Delhi with horrible cruelty and eventual massacre.

But the English proved conquerors in the great struggle, and once more the Diwan-i-kas, or Hall of Private Audience, the Hall of the Peacock Throne, is occupied. The last monarch of the once powerful Moghul race is in the throne room of his empire. His name is Mohammed Bahadur. "He is a mean-looking old man, plainly dressed, crouched upon a low native bedstead, and smoking a hookah. His hairs are white, and what little expression remains in his Jewish features is not pleasant to look at. Before him at a table sit a row of officers in the English uniform. They are judging him for treason to the power to whose protection and generosity alone he owed his position and ability to do mischief. After the most ample and painstaking investigation they convict him of treachery and murder."

Mr. Minturn, in his book entitled "From New York to Delhi," has well said: "Of all the remarkable events of which the Diwan-i-kas has been the theatre, this last was certainly the most extraordinary and the most significant. If the trial of Charles the First was not merely his individual condemnation, but was also the practical denial and abolition of the divine right of English kings, and the adoption of the democratical idea in the Government, then the judgment pronounced upon the King of Delhi was not only the decree of a British court upon a miserable old man, rendered almost imbecile by age and a long life of wickedness,—it was the verdict of the civilised world on the whole line of which he was the last representative; it was the sentence pronounced by Christendom upon the utter incapacity, the childish

folly, and the intolerable oppression of the effete dynasties of Asia; it was the decision of humanity in the grand trial between Christianity and Paganism for supremacy in the East—a decision which it is not presumptuous to say has been ratified by the eternal justice of the King of kings."

From the Hall of the Peacock Throne the last of the Moghuls passed in disgrace in the year 1858, and was transported to Rangoon as a state prisoner, and there he died in 1862. The Diwan-i-kas still exists, though it is now a deserted chamber; and as I visited it a few years ago, and paused within it to think of the strange sights and deeds it had witnessed in the past, I reflected sadly on its proud claim to be a "bower of bliss." How evanescent are human greatness and human happiness! The deserted palaces of Delhi speak eloquently to us of the vanity of riches without righteousness, and of power without justice. The vanished Peacock Throne may also remind us of that Throne, the Great White Throne which abideth for ever, and before which Hindu, Moslem, and Christian must at last appear to answer for the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil.

HINDUS.

VII.

STORIES OF CASTE.

IT is not my intention in this chapter to go very deeply into the subject of caste, but only to relate some stories of caste which seem to me of interest, and which, taken together, will give a very fair idea to my young readers of this system, which has been the curse of India for ages.

In the chapter entitled "Buttoo, the Famous Archer," it will be remembered that I said that there were originally four castes—viz., the Brahmin or Priestly, the Soldier, the Merchant, and the Servant or Sudra caste. Of these, now, practically only the first and the last exist—the Brahmin and the Sudra—

though these are broken up into innumerable sub-castes.

There are four things in which the rules of caste exercise a special influence, and those are (1) that individuals cannot be married except in their own caste; (2) that people of different castes must not eat together, or partake of food prepared by a member of another caste, save by a Brahmin, who can cook for all castes; (3) that the different castes must keep to the occupations they have inherited from their fathers; (4) that certain particular matters must be attended to by the different castes at funerals.

It is easy to be seen from these regulations that caste and rank are two very different things. A native of India has forcibly said, "Rank is accessible to all, but caste is not: worth and greatness of mind have raised the weaver and the ploughman in England to the station of peers; but between the Brahmins and the Sudras the gulf, now at least, is impassable." Thus, in a hundred ways caste interferes with the progress, the comfort, and the happiness of the people of India. Bishop Heber, speaking of this system in his famous "Diary," has said, "The caste system tends, more than anything else the devil has yet invented, to destroy the feelings of general benevolence, and to make nine-tenths of mankind the hopeless slaves of the remainder."

The pride which caste has engendered in the Brahmins of India has gone to the absurd and sinful length of leading them to regard themselves as gods, before whom all the rest of mankind must bow in reverence and awe. To some extent, at the present

day, the people of India resent these intolerant claims of the men of the highest caste; but still subserviency to, and even adoration of, Brahmins is all too common. A true independence of spirit is sorely needed in India on this vital subject, and it would be well if all Hindus would say with one of their number, the poet Kapila, in vigorous tones,—

> "Oh, Brahmins, list to me!
> In all this blessed land
> There is but one great caste,
> One tribe and brotherhood.
> One God doth dwell above,
> And He hath made us one
> In birth and frame and tongue."

Mr. Minturn, in an account of his travels in India, tells a story of how he inadvertently broke the caste of a Brahmin. He writes: "I had a little illustration of the inconveniences of caste before reaching Benares, after crossing the river Sone. The coachman had left the carriage to get a fresh horse, and, as he was rather long gone, I took up the bugle, which is carried by all dâk-coachmen, to recall him. No sooner, however, had my lips touched it, than all the bystanders groaned in concert. I asked my servant what the matter was, and heard in reply that the coachman was a Brahmin, and would be unable henceforth to use the bugle without loss of caste, which, as he was a Brahmin, could not be regained. However, it turned out he was a very low-caste Brahmin, and could be reinstated by the payment of a fine, in the shape of a feast to his friends; so he finally made up his mind to blow the bugle, lose caste, and restore himself by standing

treat, rather than have the greater expense of buying a new bugle. He would not, after all, however, put his mouth to it, until he had heated the mouthpiece in live coals and scoured it with mud and cowdung to purify it from the pollution of my lips."

The same writer, commenting on the subject of caste in another part of his book, says: "Although the Brahmins are properly priests, and the other castes are generally called by the name of some trade, so that they are to some extent guilds, yet a man of any caste is allowed to do anything which does not require him to touch substances, or engage in occupations, which are polluting, according to the rules of his particular caste. For instance, a Brahmin will be a coachman, a clerk, or an employé of Government; and perhaps their most common occupations are cooking and begging. But no matter how menial is their occupation, however poor and miserable they may be, whether squatted on the mud, cooking, or begging, naked in the streets, Brahmins consider themselves, and are looked upon by the Hindus, as infinitely superior in rank to the mightiest monarchs in Christendom. So also any Hindu will be a domestic servant; but he will not cook beef or take care of fowls: he will make his master's bed, and mend his clothes; but he will not sweep the room, or empty the dirty water, unless he be of low caste. The higher the caste generally, the fewer the occupations that the subject can engage in, and the more limited the number of articles he can eat. There are some castes so low that scarcely anything is a pollution to them, and they even eat the putrid meat of animals

which have died a natural death. Still they are very punctilious on the few points which mark their caste."

The fact mentioned by Mr. Minturn, that Hindu servants will attend to some household matters and not to others, is the reason why in Northern India so many servants are needed in the homes of Europeans. There were, if I remember aright, ten servants in my own household when I was in Calcutta.

The Rev. H. F. Blackett, late of the Cambridge Mission, Delhi, in his charming little book entitled "Two Years in an Indian Mission," speaking of caste peculiarities amongst servants, remarks: "No Hindu servant will ever wait at table. Cooks and table-servants are always Mohammedans or Christians, as the Mohammedans do not object to eating meat. My bearer, who was a Hindu, would bring me the early toast and cup of tea, with which every Anglo-Indian refreshes himself when rising, breakfast being late; but whenever, in view of a long service before breakfast, one of the diminutive eggs of the country was added to my repast, he would never touch it, but bring in the tea and toast as usual, one of the Christian or Mohammedan servants gravely following with the egg; for the boiling and eating of the egg implied the premature destruction of a prospective chicken, and that would be a great offence."

In India, though innumerable animals are held in great reverence, and are treated as sacred, yet there are some, such as the dog, the long-tailed sheep, and the donkey, which are held in great dishonour, being regarded as unclean, and as defiling members of

nearly all castes who may touch or be touched by them.

Miss Cumming, in her book on India, tells a story of how some children's desire to ride a donkey caused a great stir amongst her dependants, who told her that only the lowest castes would touch such an animal. Let me quote the passage, which runs: "We had a curious proof of caste prejudice, when it was proposed that the children should have a donkey instead of being carried by men. The servants came in a body to my sister to represent the horrors of the case. Surely she could not be in earnest in wishing to subject the children to such an indignity; but if indeed it were so, they must with one voice protest that not one of them would touch it. So great was the excitement that as she passed through the public bazaars strangers came up to her in a most respectful manner, to express their hope that the mem-sahib would not think of such a thing, for indeed Charlie-Sahib was worthy of more honour. Surely he might have a pony. Charlie, however, resolutely refused to ride a pony, so a goat carriage was substituted." Thus the difficulty was surmounted to the great satisfaction of the Hindus, whose caste prejudices would have been greatly outraged if Master Charlie had taken donkey-rides.

The Rev. James Kennedy, late of Benares, tells a story of caste prejudice in association with sheep, which is also worth recording, as throwing light upon the idiosyncrasies of Hindu faith and customs. The Hindus are not a flesh-eating people, yet they will eat the flesh of goats and kids offered in sacrifice,

and also the flesh of short-tailed sheep, though long-tailed ones are an abomination to them. Now for the story. Mr. Kennedy says: "We saw once an

LOW CASTE WOMAN WITH WATER-BOTTLE.

amusing instance of the notion of uncleanness attached to this species of sheep. A few sheep were being chosen by a purchaser from a flock. The animals were scampering about, showing, according to their nature, their unwillingness to be caught. Three or

four men were engaged in catching them; but one every now and then started back when about to lay his hand on a sheep, exclaiming, 'It is a tailed one! It is a tailed one!' as if he would be hopelessly defiled by touching it, while his less scrupulous companions of the same caste said, 'Never mind! What does it matter? It will do you no harm!' They would not have eaten its flesh; but their caste spirit was sufficiently relaxed to allow them to touch it."

In association with caste, the so-called *sacred thread* plays a prominent part. Though it is the distinguishing mark of Brahmins, yet other castes also wear it. Indeed, it is only the Sudra or lowest caste which does not wear it. It is the Brahminical thread, however, which is held in the greatest reverence. When a Brahmin youth attains his eighth year, he is invested with this simple badge of honour, of which, however, it is no exaggeration to say he is as proud as any earl is of his coronet. The poitra, or sacred thread, is the mark in India of the aristocracy; and a Brahmin would sooner part with his life than with this emblem of his power and greatness.

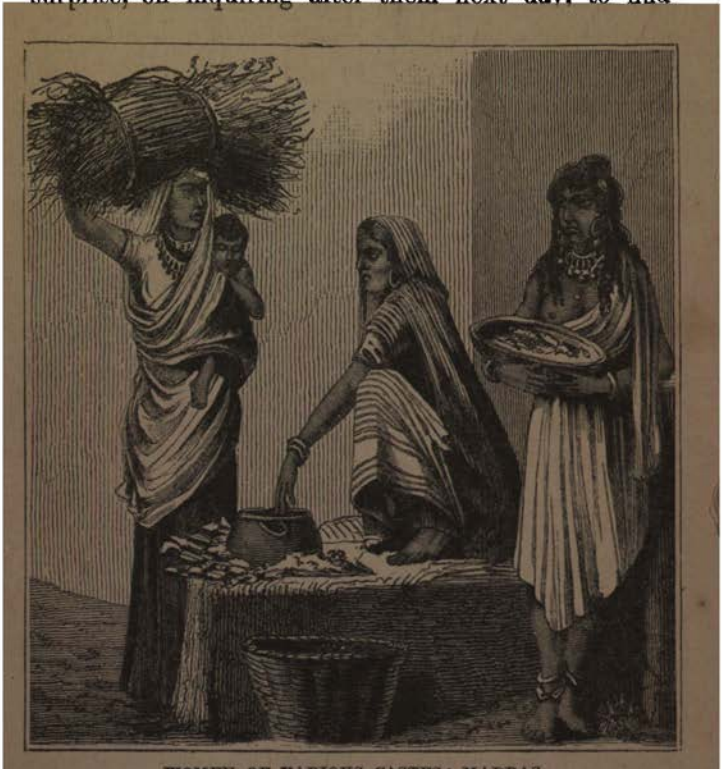
The difference between the poitra of other castes and the sacred thread of the Brahmins lies mainly in the fact that it must be of cotton only. According to one authority, "It must be made of three cotton threads, each composed of three other fine threads, which must be twisted to a running accompaniment of sacred texts, while sprinkled with holy water from a sprinkler of the divine Kusa grass. The cord is supposed to symbolise the three incarnations of

Brahma, and it must, moreover, be entirely the handiwork of some parental Brahmin, who must himself gather the cotton from the plant, spin and twist the mystic cord, which is the bearer's patent of nobility."

To show how caste at times stands in the way of common humanity, let me recite a typical case which the Rev. J. Ewen mentions in his "Sketches and Stories of Native Life." The passage reads: "One Sunday morning during the rains of 1880, we were engaged in divine service, when we were startled by the crash of a falling house. I happened to be sitting by the door, and, turning round, saw the masonry and beams of a neighbouring dwelling coming down in a confused mass. Shortly before I had looked at the building, but saw no reason for supposing it was in danger; and the shopman evidently had no idea the walls were being undermined, for he was busy weighing out various commodities to several customers, who were equally unconscious of danger.

"The service was brought to a close, and those of us who were present went to work to dig out the seven or eight persons who were reported buried under the *débris*. *And we were left to do it alone, although hundreds of natives hurried up to look on.* Not a man would assist. We appealed in vain, for the only reply we got to our requests for assistance was, 'We don't know what caste they are of.' About half an hour after the collapse of the building an army of labourers came up, and with their aid we dug out eight men who had been buried close on an hour. One poor fellow had a heavy beam resting over his chest. All seemed terribly injured; and we thought,

as we placed them on the litters and sent them off to the hospital, not one would survive. What was my surprise, on inquiring after them next day, to find



WOMEN OF VARIOUS CASTES: MADRAS.

that they had all gone home, not much the worse for their experience of falling bricks and timber."

The entombed people might have died, however, but for the prompt action of the missionary and his friends. The point of the story is that the Hindu

onlookers were prevented from helping their fellow-countrymen, even in the hour of deadly peril, by the fear of breaking caste. When caste and humanity are thus opposed are we not right in characterising the custom as an accursed thing? I am reminded of a Telugu poem which says:

> "If we look through all the earth,
> Men we see have equal birth;
> Made in one great brotherhood,
> Equal in the sight of God.
>
> "Food or caste or place of birth
> Cannot alter human worth.
> Why let caste be so supreme?
> 'Tis but folly's passing stream."

It is a folly, however, which has a strong hold on the people of India, even though they cannot close their eyes to its evil effects.

In treating a subject like this it is only fair to say that there are some Europeans who declare that the Hindus are greatly maligned with respect to caste. Sir George Birdwood, for instance, in an article in the *Indian Magazine and Review* of January 1892, declares that all restrictions between caste and caste, and even between men of caste and outcasts, break down at once under circumstances calculated to evoke strong sympathy between man and man. This assertion Sir George illustrates by a story or two. He says: "My personal servant in Bombay was of good caste,—in fact, a Rajput. He dared never touch me under ordinary circumstances. But once when I was ill of dysentery, he would let no one else attend upon me, and rendered me every service exacted under

such circumstances of the most self-sacrificing Christian charity. Further, one year when I was staying at Matheran, I recollect the late Sir Munguldas Nathoobhoy, when riding out, coming upon a Chinaman in a most agonising condition of suffering and squalor, apparently dying of an open ulcer of the stomach. Sir Munguldas at once dismounted, and assisted the man home to his own house, and there had the poor fellow attended to and nursed until he most happily recovered. . . . I could fill a book with like anecdotes; but the round sum of them is this—that in all the amenities, sympathies, charities, and other good offices of affection, justice and religion, which, according to Christian theologians, make up holy living, I have never known man in India, Hindu or Mohammedan, fall short of Christian Englishmen."

I do not agree with Sir George Birdwood in the conclusions he draws from his anecdotes. I, however, admire the conduct of the caste men he refers to. Thank God that there are men even in India, too tender-hearted and noble-minded to let caste rules stand in the way of their humanity; but such men are choice spirits, they are not the usual run of the Hindu race. As far as I can form a judgment from my experience of life in the East, and from my studies in the subject of caste, I believe that such gracious cases of humanitarian conduct in the face of caste rules, as quoted by Sir George Birdwood, are decidedly the exception and not the rule. It is vain for any one to seek to prove that caste and humanity can go hand in hand. The people of India as a whole dread caste-defilement, and while they may be kindly disposed at the sight

of human suffering, they are almost uniformly kept by the fear of contamination from acting the Good Samaritan. Why, some of the Hindus themselves acknowledge and regret their national failing. The learned author of "India, Past and Present," Mr. Shoshee Chunder Dutt, in a thoughtful and fair article on "Caste," has the courage and the grace to say,—"The sum total of the effects of caste is, that civilisation has been brought to a standstill in the country by its mischievous restrictions, and there is no hope of a remedy till these restrictions are removed."

Caste sometimes interferes with even the common civilities of life. The Rev. S. Mateer, in his "Native Life in Travancore," says that as a rule in that State a native gentleman will shake hands with a European, though afterwards he will bathe to remove the pollution. There are, however, certain special occasions when caste rules absolutely forbid a native to touch a European, or any one not of his own caste. It seems on one such occasion a British military officer of rank offered his hand to a young Hindu noble; but the latter drew back, exclaiming, "I cannot touch you to-day, I am holy just now. We are a religious people, you know." The officer only remarked, "Well, you will shake hands with me the next time I ask you;" meaning, of course, that he never would ask him again. The young prince, not understanding the English idiom, replied, "Oh, certainly!" Caste that can go to such extremes is intolerable. There is a pride about it, and an assumption of superior holiness that is insufferable.

One of the worst things about caste is its innate

selfishness. It teaches a man to think of himself first and chief, and only of others as they minister to his comfort or happiness in this life. Brahmins are, sad to say, not ashamed to acknowledge that selfishness is at the root of their religion, for they have a curious proverbial saying, to this effect:

> "Preserve your wife, preserve your pelf,
> But give them both to save yourself;
> There's other wealth, another wife,
> But where is there another life?"

How opposed is such teaching to the spirit of Christ, who exhorted all men to think of self last, saying, "If any man would be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me"! Brahminism is as the poles asunder from Christianity. And yet we would fain hope that the work of our missionaries is making some impression on the selfishness of the East.

I think there can be no doubt that since the advent of Europeans in India the caste system has been greatly modified and changed, and in the large cities, at any rate, has become less strict in its most objectionable features. Still, the country as a whole is ruled by it as with a rod of iron; and he is a bold man who openly dares to break caste rules. In secrecy, doubtless, with many caste is very often broken with impunity. I have read a story of a European officer at Delhi, who told his orderly, a Brahmin, on one occasion to pull off his boots for him, forgetting for the moment the caste prejudice of the man. However, to his great surprise his orderly at once complied, though by doing so he broke his caste

When the officer exclaimed, "How is it that you a Brahmin do not mind touching my boots?" he received for reply the candid confession—"Sahib, there's no one looking." Let us hope, however, that the majority of the people are more conscientious, and have a nobler reason for breaking caste, when they do break it.

Caste, as may easily be understood, is a most serious obstacle in the way of some Hindus becoming avowed Christians, and the missionary has to act cautiously and judiciously in such cases, and not to expect too much from anxious inquirers all at once. Bishop Thoburn of Calcutta, in his book entitled "My Missionary Apprenticeship," tells very graphically the story of his treatment of his first inquirer. He says: "My first inquirer was an elderly dovotee of high caste, who was a stranger at Nynee Tal. His ears had been cruelly perforated, and he wore two large, clumsy wooden rings in them. He was a dull man, but avowed his intention to become a Christian, and seemed to have a little knowledge of the new religion. He expected me to provide for him in all respects, and I was unwise enough to assume the obligation.

"I took the case in hand with more vigour than common sense, and soon brought matters to a crisis. Having made up my mind that caste was a great iniquity, I required this simple old man to break through all its restraints at a stroke; and in order to make the work more complete, I required him to show his renunciation of both caste and mendicancy by taking a basket and going to work among the coolies. He very meekly went to work; but when it came to

the question of formally breaking his caste by eating with Christians he quietly but persistently refused. He remained a few days; but finding at last that he must choose between breaking his caste and leaving, he quietly disappeared. I thought at the time the case had been well managed, but I am not very proud of it now. Young missionaries cannot be too careful to study the prejudices and modes of thought of those to whom they go, nor can they be too gentle or considerate in dealing with them. To the old devotee I must have seemed a harsh and exacting young man, while it is to be feared that he went away with an utterly distorted notion of the requirements of the Christian religion."

Missionaries in India are, however, now pretty well agreed that all their converts should either at baptism or soon after their admittance into the Christian Church renounce all caste prejudices and customs. And I think rightly so; for are not all such distinctions utterly foreign to the Christian religion, which declares that "God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth," and that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"?

In various churches in India, but more especially in South India, native Christians have at times been very wilful and stubborn in the matter of caste. Mr. Hough, in his "History of Christianity in India," speaking of the Tranquebar Mission in the time of the devoted Danish missionary, Dr. John, says: "The Christians contended for distinct places at church, and

even two cups at the Lord's Supper, for the higher and lower castes. The latter, however respectable for wealth or moral and Christian character, were compelled to sit apart from the rest, and to have their separate cup. At last Dr. John resolved to endure this anti-Christian custom no longer, and gave notice, that if they would not of their own accord put an end to these odious distinctions, especially at the Lord's table, he would himself abolish them. His admonitions being obstinately resisted, he executed his threat with regard to the Sacrament at least, by melting the two cups into one. This effectually settled the matter. The men of caste made a great outcry at first, and left the church; but finding they could not intimidate their faithful pastor into a compliance with their wishes, they gradually returned, and henceforth drank out of one and the same cup with the pariah."

It would be a calamity, indeed, if Hindu caste were allowed to obtain a permanent foothold in Christian churches. But such is not likely to be the case. The tendency is rather for the whole gigantic system of caste in the East to give way before the demands of civilisation and humanity. It will probably be long years before this hydra-headed monster is slain; but some day, in the mercy of God, it will come to pass.

BANYAN TREE.

VIII.

SACRED TREES AND PLANTS.

INDIA is remarkable for its trees and plants, which are to be found growing everywhere in rich abundance. Many of the trees, as well as plants, flower, and at certain seasons of the year, the gardens and public promenades of Eastern cities present a sight of glowing colours truly marvellous, and which surpasses anything to be seen in Western lands.

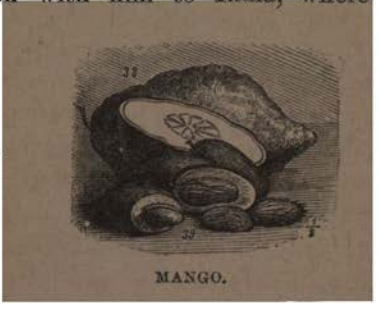
There are certain trees and shrubs with which we are familiar in Europe, that are scarcely ever found in India. For instance, the useful apple tree is not cultivated, except in the North-West Provinces, and there only in a few European gardens. The climate

is not favourable to the tree, for its growth is too luxuriant, and the apples produced are small and insipid. Gooseberry and currant bushes are unknown, and strawberries and raspberries are a rarity. Plum and cherry trees also are not found in India as a general rule. Europeans living in the East at first miss the fruit trees of the West, but in time a taste for native fruits is developed, which are ultimately declared to be delicious.

One of the most beautiful of Indian trees is the pomegranate, and the fruit also is very pleasant. "The leaves are of a rich dark green, very glossy, and adorned at the same time with every variety of bud, bloom, and fruit, in the several stages of vegetation, from the first bud to the ripe fruit in rich luxuriance, and this in succession nearly throughout the year. The bright scarlet colour of the buds and blossoms seldom varies in its shade, but contrasted with the glossy, dark green foliage the effect excites wonder and admiration."

Perhaps the most delightful Indian fruit is mango, though the plantain and the custard-apple run it close in popularity with the common people. The mango tree is magnificent in its growth, and splendid in its foliage. In some parts of India groves, or, as they are called, "topes," of mango trees are cultivated, for the splendid shade they give as well as for their fruit. The season of blooming is about February and March; the aromatic scent from the flowers is delightful, and the beautiful clustering of the blossoms is not very unlike the horse-chestnut in appearance, but branching horizontally.

It is said that originally the mango tree did not flourish in India. There is a legend which declares that this famous tree was first found in the garden of Ravana, the wicked king of Lanka or Ceylon. There Hanuman, the monkey god, found it when he went over with Rama to rescue Sita, as related in a previous chapter. Hanuman was attracted, it would appear, after the war, by the fair orchards of the enemy, and regaled himself with the delicious fruit; and when he left Ceylon he took care to carry some mango stones back with him to India, where he planted



MANGO.

them, with the result that the mango has become the favourite national fruit of the Hindus. Of the mango tree, Bishop Heber once said, "It is certainly, I conceive, the largest fruit-tree in the world." I would add, "Its fruit is probably the most pleasant to the palate."

The people of the East, in their craze for sacred objects to revere and adore, have not overlooked the vegetable creation. Quite a number of the trees and plants of India are regarded as sacred. I cannot give a complete list, but the following are the most famous. The *pipal tree* is sacred to the god Brahma, and the

banyan or figtree to Vishnu. The *bel* tree, with its triple leaf, is sacred to the god Siva. The golden *kuswar flower* is sacred to marriages and to battle. The *clithorea* is sacred to the goddess Durga, the *custard-apple* to the goddess Sita, while the *nim tree*, the *cedar*, the *bo tree* and the *tulsi plant* are also held in very general veneration.

The ficus Indica, or, as it is commonly called, the banyan tree, is perhaps the most wonderful of Indian trees. It assumes immense proportions, and has the peculiarity of sending down roots from its branches, which roots, when they touch the ground, strike in and form new trunks, and these again when grown make fresh branches and fresh rootlets, and so it goes on until in course of time the parent tree has grown into innumerable trees, which form groves, in whose shade in some instances thousands of people might recline. A very noble specimen of the banyan tree is to be found in the Botanical Gardens, Calcutta, and another very fine tree may be seen at Barrackpore.

Sir Edwin Arnold, in his "Song Celestial," draws some moral lessons from the banyan tree, which is regarded by the Hindus as an emblem of the life of man. As the banyan tree grows to maturity in the air and sunlight, and is ever throwing forth new roots to bind itself to the earth, so it is with man, who is often merely of the earth, earthy. According to Sir Edwin Arnold:

> "Its branches shoot to heaven and sink to earth,
> Even as the deeds of men, which take their birth
> From qualities: its silver sprays and blooms,
> And all the eager verdure of its girth,

Leap to quick life at kiss of sun and air,
As men's lives quicken to the temptings fair
Of wooing sense: its hanging rootlets seek
The soil beneath, helpless to hold it there,
As actions wrought amid this world of men
Bind them by ever-tightening bonds again."

Perhaps some of my young readers find it difficult to grasp the subtle meaning of the foregoing lines; but there will be no difficulty in understanding the following, by Tom Moore, who uses the peculiarities of the banyan tree to emphasise his love for his darling mother.

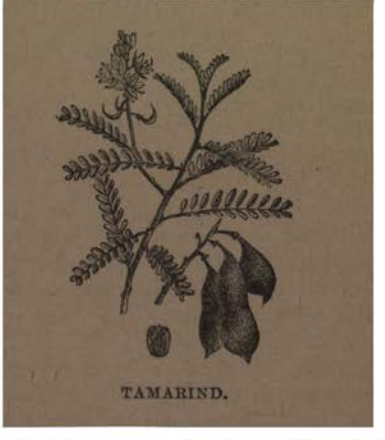
The poet sweetly sings:

"They tell me of an Indian tree
Which, howsoe'er the sun and sky
May tempt its boughs to wander free,
And shoot and blossom wide and high,
Far better loves to bend its arms
Downwards again to that dear earth
From which the life that fills and warms
Its grateful being first had birth:
'Tis thus, though woo'd by flattering friends
And fed with fame—if fame it be—
This heart, my own dear mother, bends,
With love's true instinct, back to thee."

In an old temple in the city of Allahabad there is what is called by the natives *an undecaying banyan tree*, which is an object of wonderful veneration. I went to see it on one occasion, and found the passages leading to it crowded with eager worshippers, who regarded the tree as very sacred, and who counted it an inestimable boon to be allowed to bow down before it in reverent adoration.

As far back as the seventh century this tree was

famous. A Chinese traveller of that date, Hiouen Thsang, in his Diary, wrote: "In the midst of the city stood a Brahminical temple, to which the presentation of a single piece of money procured as much merit as that of one thousand pieces elsewhere. And before the principal room of the temple there was a large tree, with wide-spreading branches, which was said to be the abode of a man-eating demon. The tree was surrounded with human bones, the



TAMARIND.

remains of pilgrims who had sacrificed their lives before the temple, a practice which had been observed from time immemorial."

Referring to this account of the Chinese traveller, General Cunningham, in one of his Archæological Survey Reports of India, says: "I think there can be little doubt that the famous tree here described is the well-known undecaying banyan tree, which is still, in the nineteenth century, an object of worship at Allahabad. But this tree is now situated under-

ground, at one side of a pillared court, which would appear to have been open formerly, and which is, I believe, the remains of the temple described by Hiouen Thsang."

Thus we see that at Allahabad for twelve hundred years a sacred tree has received the worship of devout Hindus. The present so-called tree, however, is nothing but a log of wood, though the priests solemnly affirm that it is a genuine tree. I examined it very carefully, handling it by permission in different parts, and I felt satisfied that it was simply a decayed trunk of a tree standing about two yards high, and forked about half-way up. The whole thing is such a glaring imposture that only the men who wilfully blind their eyes can be deceived by it. Yet Hindus gather from all parts of the land to worship what they call the undecaying banyan tree.

The pipul tree or *Ficus religiosa* is also very generally worshipped. This tree is regarded as occupied by the god Brahma, the first person of the Hindu Trinity. I have heard that sometimes the pipul tree may be seen invested with the sacred thread of the Brahmins, as if the tree were a living being. The pipul is called "the Brahmin of trees" on account of the cleanness of its leaves, which are regarded as emblems of Brahminical purity. Ghosts, moreover, are supposed to reside in pipul trees, and Hindus have various ways of propitiating such uncanny creatures. Bishop Heber says that on one occasion, when he was travelling, he saw an earthen pot hanging on a branch of a pipul tree; and when he asked his servant Abdullah what was intended by the placing of the

vessel there, the reply he received was, "Probably there is water in the pot, and it has been brought hither by some person whose father is dead, that the ghost of the dead man may drink and be refreshed and give no trouble to the living."

Bishop Heber had another adventure in connection with pipul trees. It appears that these trees are held in such veneration that they are never injured, nor cut down, nor burnt by the devout. Some Hindus are actually so strict that they will not allow even withered branches to be used as firewood. It was not for fuel, however, that the good Bishop on one occasion wanted to gather branches of the sacred pipul, but for food for the elephants and camels he took with him in his travels, to carry himself, his retainers, and his baggage.

In the neighbourhood of a certain village, when the Bishop instructed his servants to feed the animals, the inhabitants were terribly angry, and even attacked and beat the men who attempted to cut boughs off the sacred pipul. Such a thing had never been heard of before by the villagers, and their superstitious veneration for the tree led them to oppose the sacrilege. However, the Bishop by his persuasive powers overcame the objections of the people, and the animals were eventually fed. I imagine backsheesh played a very prominent part in the negotiations, for that useful commodity is the sesame that opens many a locked door in the East.

Strange to say, though the people of India show such veneration for the sacred pipul, they do not like to have the tree in the vicinity of their places of

business. Miss Cumming tells a story of a European magistrate who, in his ignorance of Eastern customs, thought he would confer a great benefit on a certain town, by planting pipul trees in the market-place. "To his astonishment the buniahs or tradespeople came to tell him frankly that as these trees are so sacred that no Hindu dare utter a false word or do an unjust act beneath their shadow, their presence in the market-place would make it impossible to carry on business. So these beautifully picturesque trees are generally found apart from the business quarter, near to wells or temples, where their truth-compelling presence is less embarrassing."

The Hindu belief is that the leaves of the pipul tree whisper every word they hear to the god Brahma. In business transactions, sad to say, much lying and trickery are indulged in—hence the objection of the people to the presence of the ever-listening tree in the bazaars. What an insight this little fact gives us into the weaknesses, sins and superstitions of the Hindus. The people would fain serve both the gods and mammon, but the latter proves stronger than religion.

The tamarind tree is another of the trees of India held in considerable regard, though more on account of its medicinal properties than anything else. The ripe fruit is soaked in salt and water to extract the juice, which, after it has been strained, is drunk as a blood purifier. But though the fruit of the tamarind is regarded as wholesome and beneficial to health, the shade of the tree is considered for some reason to be injurious both to man and beast. Vegetation also, it

is believed, does not thrive in the vicinity of the tamarind tree. Consequently, as a rule in India, this tree is planted apart from other trees, and very often it is devoted to the dead ; for it may be discovered sheltering the tomb of some revered or saintly character.

To show how beliefs and customs may vary in the East, let me say that in Ceylon a contrary opinion is maintained to that held in India with regard to the shade of the tamarind tree. While in India the people like to live at some distance from the tree, in Ceylon they like to get near it. Indeed, the Ceylonese build their homes under the tamarind from the conviction that of all trees its shade is the coolest. Europeans who have tested both opinions, incline to the side of the people of Ceylon, and think that the Hindus make a mistake in shunning the grateful shade of their tamarind trees. Superstitions die hard, however, and it seems almost impossible to get the people of India to change their views even with respect to the shade of a tree.

The so-called bo tree of the East, a species of banyan, really the pipul tree, is the sacred tree of the Buddhists. It was under a bôdhi tree, which means the tree of knowledge, that Buddha became the Enlightened One; and ever since his time Buddhists have regarded the tree as sacred. It was at Gaya, as I have related in an earlier chapter, that Buddha sat under a tree in profound abstraction, and wrestled with and overcame the powers of evil within him and around him. When in India I visited the famous locality, explored the temple, and searched the whole

place for the bôdhi tree, with no very satisfactory result; for I was shown first one tree and then another, and solemnly assured in each case that I was gazing upon the sacred relic of the past.

The conclusion I came to was that the original tree had entirely disappeared, and left no genuine representative behind. However, according to Sir Edwin Arnold, who visited Buddha Gaya about a fortnight after I had been there, I was wrong in thus thinking. In "India Revisited" Sir Edwin says: "South-west of the temple is a raised square platform, and on one corner of this, its trunk and branches adorned with leaf-gold and coloured here and there with red ochre, stands the present representative of the famous bôdhi tree, replacing the many successors of that under which the divine sage achieved the Supreme All-perfect Buddhahood. The present tree is a flourishing little pipul, thick with dark, glossy, pointed leaves, from which the Brahmin priest, who was reciting the names of Siva to a party of pilgrims, readily—too readily, indeed!—gave me a branch. I should have been better pleased if he had resented my request; but Buddha is unknown and unhonoured upon his own ground by the Sivaites, although it is his name which has made the place famous, and which brings these countless millions."

Whatever suspicion or doubt we may have with regard to the authenticity of the sacred bo tree at Buddha Gaya, it is generally believed there can be none with regard to the bo tree at Anarajapoora in Ceylon. It is an historical fact that a branch was taken from the tree at Gaya more than two thousand

years ago, and planted by King Tissa at Anarajapoora, where it speedily took root, and in time became a great tree.

It is seriously affirmed by competent critics that the present tree is the identical one planted by the Buddhist monarch B.C. 288. Trees do not die of old

THE BO TREE, CEYLON.

age in the proper sense of the term, and if uninjured there is no limit to the duration of their life. The one at Anarajapoora is believed to have escaped destruction in times of war, and though it is known to have suffered somewhat by storms, it still remains an old but vigorous tree, and is amongst the Buddhists an object of special veneration on account of its great

age and sacred associations. Devout Buddhist pilgrims travel from all parts of the East to Ceylon to pay homage to their renowned bo tree ; and they are happy beyond all words to express if they can but secure a few leaves which, "severing themselves," may chance to fall from the tree, which is sacred to their lord, Gautama Buddha.

Amongst *plants* in India the *tulsi* or basil is regarded with special veneration. It is the sacred plant of the god Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu. The story goes that a woman named Tulsi became a saint, and engaged in such cruel religious austerities that the gods were highly delighted, and asked her what they could do by way of reward. Tulsi replied to the effect that she would like to become the wife of Vishnu ; but the god had a wife already, named Lakshmi, and when the latter heard of the request she cursed the female saint and turned her into a plant. However, Vishnu by way of compensation told Tulsi that he would take the form of a stone, and ever remain by her side on earth.

The Hindus believe all this nonsense, and keep a Shalgram, which is a black, hollow, nearly round stone about the size of a watch, in their houses, with one leaf of the tulsi plant under it and another upon it. And the tulsi plant itself is tended with the most assiduous care. Usually such a plant may be found just outside the door, and it is watered daily. During the two hottest months of the year a perforated vessel of water is hung over the plant so that it may not be a moment without moisture.

When a tulsi plant dies there is great lamentation,

as if a human being had departed this life. As a rule the dead plant is taken to the river and solemnly committed to the bosom of Mother Ganges. The tulsi plant is on certain occasions worshipped, more especially by women, who walk round and round it, bow to it, and prostrate themselves before it while they repeat a form of prayer or praise. Such worship is considered to be very meritorious.

Kusa grass is also held to be sacred by the Hindus, and forms part of the offerings made to the gods. It is a sharp-edged grass; and there is a legend that once a vessel of amrita—a drink of the gods—having been placed on a patch of the grass, and a little of the liquid having trickled through, some snakes proceeded to lick it up. The sharp grass, it is affirmed, slit their tongues, and hence serpents' tongues are forked; and the grass, having been touched by the amrita, was thenceforth holy or sacred in the eyes of gods and men.

There are other famous and sacred trees and plants, such as the cedar, the acacia, the palm, the cocoa-nut, and the bamboo, which, however, I shall not linger over, as they are not commonly worshipped.

The curious custom of giving trees in marriage is perhaps worthy of passing notice. Miss Cumming says in the story of her travels in India: "From time to time we noticed curious twin trees: a date palm growing out of the heart of a banyan, or a pipul tree from an indiarubber. These are sometimes of natural growth, and sometimes grafted by devotees; but in every case such tree-wedlock is held by the Hindu in deepest veneration."

The wood of sacred trees is used occasionally for images. Idols are usually of stone, or brass, or mud; but now and again a wooden image is seen. Such images are not found in private houses, but only in temples. The nim tree, which is a great favourite in India, supplies the chief part of the wood used in idol-making. Images of Vishnu are made from the nim tree; also images of Siva, and images of the goddesses Durga, Radha, and Lakshmee.

As trees and plants are held in such reverence in India, it is of course considered a meritorious thing to plant them, not only in gardens and in the neighbourhood of houses, but also on the public roads. In a hot climate trees are a great boon; and thus both utilitarian and religious motives prompt to the wholesale planting of them. The person who plants a banyan or a pipul, a nim or a cocoanut tree, and devotes the tree and its fruit and shade to public uses, is promised admittance into heaven. Trees are dedicated with the same ceremonies as are common at the setting up of an image of the gods; and the person who does the meritorious deed, exclaims—say in the case of a banyan tree—"Oh, Vishnu! grant that for planting this tree I may continue as many years in heaven as the banyan shall remain growing on earth."

Thus in various ways the superstitions and foolish beliefs of the Hindus show themselves in association with trees and plants falsely called "sacred."

PART III.

THE TAJ MAHAL, AGRA.

I.

TALES OF THE MUTINY.

THE most momentous political event connected with the British occupation of India was undoubtedly the Mutiny of 1857, when our very existence in the country was at peril. At that date the English had just been one hundred years in the land, and to many of the Hindus and Mohammedans it seemed a suitable time to attempt to throw off the foreign yoke.

It must not be thought that the people of India generally, what we may call the common people, were anxious to get rid of English rule. The rising against us was not a popular movement like that which over-

threw the Bourbon dynasty in France, or like that which deprived us of the colonies which have since become the United States of America. The populace of India have scarcely known anything else but subjection, for they have been "under the yoke of the stranger" almost as far back as history takes us, and at no time have they been better treated than since the British occupation of the land.

But if it was not popular discontent that led to the Indian Rebellion, what, then, was the cause of it? The Mutiny was, there can be little doubt, due partly to the disaffection of the pampered native army, and partly to the intrigues of the unworthy Mohammedan princes whom the English had deprived of their possessions. The Moslems were really at the heart of the Rebellion, and the whole movement may be looked upon as the expiring effort of Islam to regain its lost supremacy in India.

Whatever was the cause of the Mutiny it was a time of unexampled peril to the English in the East, and forms a never-to-be-forgotten chapter in our national history. It is a subject with which my young readers ought to make themselves familiar, and I hope that what I have to say now, in relating some tales of the Mutiny, will lead to further research and study in this most interesting and important field of history on the part of all.

Great events in human life often hang on little things; and it has been gravely questioned whether the disaffection of the Moslems of Delhi and Oude, and the vague discontent of the Sepoy troops, would have culminated in a widespread rebellion against

English rule, but for the matter of what has been called "the greased cartridges."

The tale goes that towards the close of 1856, the British Government decided to replace the old musket "Brown Bess" with the new Enfield rifle, which could not, however, be easily loaded, as it was grooved, without the greasing of the cartridge. Now with what was the cartridge greased? Therein lay the germ of strife.

In January 1857, when the manufacture of the new cartridges was proceeding briskly at Dum Dum, a military station near Calcutta, a low-caste workman asked a Brahmin for a draught of water from his drinking vessel, but was indignantly refused, whereupon the workman sarcastically remarked, "Do not be so very touchy about your caste, for our masters the English will soon make high-caste and low-caste on an equality." And when asked to explain himself, the man further said that the white people had resolved to abolish all caste distinctions by smearing the new cartridges which the soldiers would have to use with beef fat and hog's lard.

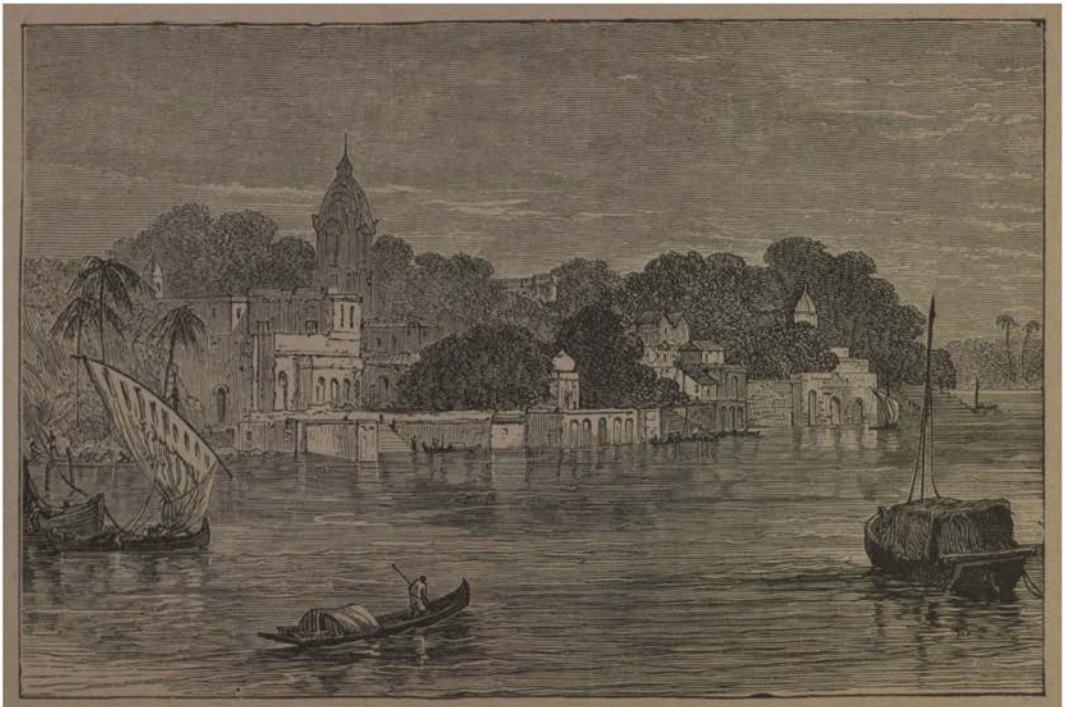
Now beef fat was the abomination of the Hindus, and hog's lard of the Moslems, and when the news of the threatened outrage spread, as it did like wildfire, there was the greatest excitement, consternation, and rage throughout the length and breadth of India. It was in vain that the Government denied that such grease had ever been thought of, for neither the Hindus nor the Moslems would listen to reason, but believed the tale of the workman who had first propagated the base untruth. Thus by such an insignificant

thing as "grease" was the disaffection against British rule deepened and fanned into a flame of war.

Though it was not known until long afterwards, it seems that the Bengal Army, after this grease episode at Dum Dum, arranged a plot by which on May 31st, 1857, the native troops all over the empire were to break out into open revolt, murder their English officers, possess themselves of forts and strong places, and declare the British rule in India to be for ever abolished. The Mohammedans of the North-West had agreed to join in the uprising.

This well-laid scheme of a general rebellion was frustrated, however, in a remarkable way. At the military station of Meerut, about forty-two miles north-east of Delhi, there was a force of about two thousand European soldiers, and a still larger force of native troops. It was feared that many of the natives were ripe for insurrection, though no one knew for certain. The 3rd Light Cavalry was under the command of Col. C. Smyth, and this officer, out of what appears to have been a mere whim, resolved on April 24th to put his troopers to the test. He held a parade of ninety skirmishers, and ordered them to load their rifles with the new cartridge; but eighty-five of the men refused to comply, declaring that they would not touch the unclean thing.

Here was wilful insubordination, and the malcontents were at once brought before a court-martial and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment with hard labour. On Saturday, May 9th, the sentences were read out before the army on parade, and the dishonoured soldiers were put in irons and taken off to



CAWNPORE.

prison. The rest of the native troops could not stand the sight, however, and next day, in the evening, they all revolted.

The first British officer to expostulate with the men was Colonel Finnis, but they would not listen to him, and shot him down. The work of slaughter thus commenced, the soldiers rushed with yells to the gaol, and released their imprisoned comrades, with whom they flew upon the European bungalows, which they sacked and gave to the flames, murdering the inmates—men, women, and children, in their unpitying rage.

General Hewett, the commandant, was not equal to the crisis ; for though he gathered together the English troops as soon as possible, and stopped the work of slaughter at Meerut, he allowed the rebels to make good their escape to Delhi, to do further and incalculable mischief there.

However, the forcing on, as it were, of the Mutiny at Meerut before the day fixed for the general uprising, was probably the salvation of British rule in India. The rebels throughout the country did not know what to think, when news reached them of the events at Meerut on May 10th. The agreement had been broken, and now it was no longer possible to work together.

As a consequence May 31st was abandoned for the general insurrection, and the troops mutinied at different times in different places, according to the pressure of events. If the awful storm had burst on one day, who can say what would have been the result? But as it was the English were able to deal

with the rebels to some extent separately, and though the struggle was against fearful odds British valour eventually prevailed.

What tales of cruelty and of bravery reach us from Delhi, the ancient capital of India, which became the seat of the rebellion! On Monday morning, May 11th, 1857, the deserters from Meerut entered Delhi post haste, and made their appearance before the Palace of the Moghul Emperor, who was a pensioner of the British Government, announcing to the astonished monarch that they had come to make him a monarch indeed, by raising him to the sovereignty of all India in place of the British Raj.

The English had three regiments of native troops in Delhi, but these at once mutinied and joined the rebels from Meerut, and assisted in the general massacre of British officers and residents which now ensued. Mr. Simon Fraser, the Commissioner, was one of the first to die. He was shot while driving through the streets in his buggy, and his head, which was severed from his body at a stroke, was carried about on a pole in triumph.

Captain Douglas, the brave commander of the Palace Guards, was the next to fall, and then the rebels came upon the station chaplain, the Rev. W. Jennings, and his daughter. Despite the tears and shrieks of the latter, her father was slain before her eyes, and then she also was put to death, after being subjected to dreadful indignities. Miss Jennings had only lately arrived from England, and was on the eve of marriage.

In other parts of the city similar awful deeds were

being enacted, and it seemed as if every European in Delhi would be cruelly done to death. At the Arsenal, however, a short but splendid resistance was made by a few Englishmen. "This magazine contained three hundred pieces of cannon, twenty thousand stand of muskets and bayonets, two hundred thousand rounds of shot and shell, and other munitions to correspond." Lieutenants Willoughby and Forrest, and Conductors Buckley and Scully, determined to hold the Arsenal against all comers, as long as it could be held, and when no longer tenable to blow the place to atoms.

Gallantly did the brave men fight against overwhelming odds, but at length Willoughby gave the signal, Buckley repeated it, and Scully fired the magazine. A report like thunder followed, the city of Delhi was shaken, as if in the throes of an earthquake, and the magazine with all its priceless stores was a mass of ruins. Thus the rebels were balked of the spoil! Was it not an heroic deed?

About fifty ladies who had escaped the general massacre in the city, took refuge in the Palace of the Emperor, on promise of protection, which promise, however, was basely broken. The princes of the royal house kept the unhappy ladies in seclusion for four days and nights, but on the fifth day they ordered them to be taken into the great courtyard and there put to death. The victims cried piteously for mercy, but no mercy was shown them, for the king's bodyguard attacked them with the sword, stabbed them, cut them down, and hewed them to pieces. It was a cowardly, dastardly affair, and was to meet, as we shall see later, with a terrible retribution.

To relieve the awful gloom of this narrative, let me mention here an act of a very different character. Not all the Mohammedans of Delhi were given over to the general spirit of hatred of the British. Instances even of great kindness to Europeans were not unknown. For example, there is a story told of a Mrs. Leeson, who, in seeking to escape with a babe in her arms, was shot at by a trooper. The bullet killed the babe, and wounded the mother in the arm. Mrs. Leeson had the presence of mind to fall down as if dead, and on the ground she lay from seven till ten at night, not daring to move. During that time several natives passing by saw her, and, kicking her savagely, said, "It serves you right, you Christian pig! May all your race perish thus miserably!"

At length, however, one person, a respectable Mohammedan gentleman, stopped near the suffering woman, and said in a whisper, "I see you are not dead: but do not fear, I will not hurt you. Rise up at once and come with me to my house." Something in the man's voice gave the lady hope. She arose without a word, and, after kissing tenderly her dead child, she followed her protector to a house close by, where she was kindly received by some native ladies. For three months she remained under that hospitable Moslem roof, until her new friends were afraid to keep her any longer. By their aid, however, she escaped from the city, and reached the English camp outside, for Delhi was by that time besieged by the British. And there of course she was safe from pursuit; and eventually she rejoined her husband, who also had escaped from the hands of the enemy.

And how had events fallen out elsewhere? A fearful storm of war was raging throughout all Northern India. Fortunately the native troops at Madras and Bombay, though they wavered in their allegiance, did not mutiny. If they had done so, the case would have been desperate indeed. The troubles in the North taxed to the utmost the British resources.

The troops at Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, and other places, all revolted, and frightful atrocities were perpetrated. A sad tale comes from Rohnee in the Santhal district. Sir Norman Leslie was seated in the verandah of his bungalow, conversing with two friends, Dr. Grant and Major Macdonald, when three soldiers crept up behind them, and suddenly attacked them, all unarmed as they were. Lieutenant Leslie fell pierced through the back by a sword. His dying words were, "What will become of my poor wife and children?" Dr. Grant was seriously wounded and disabled. Major Macdonald was thus left to contend alone with three fierce assailants. Snatching up a chair he stood on his guard, but a blow reached his forehead and nearly scalped him. With the blood dripping from the frightful wound, and almost blinding him, he still stood at bay however, and rushing at his assailants belaboured them with the chair until they lost heart and fled. It was an extraordinary spectacle, and never perhaps was a chair used in a life and death struggle to better purpose.

A few days afterwards Major Macdonald discovered the three soldiers, and had them put in irons. Their guilt being proved, they were publicly hanged as a

warning to the rest of the troopers, who were thoroughly cowed by the determined action of the gallant major. Thus at Rohnee the mutineers did not get the upper hand.

At Benares, too, prompt measures saved the city from being sacked. There were only two hundred European troops to face two thousand native troops, when the latter mutinied. However, the Europeans had three pieces of cannon, and when the natives cha ged them, they were received by a shower of grape-shot. Three times did the Sepoys charge up to the very muzzles of the cannon, but the Europeans stood firm and drove them back. Darkness had now fallen, but Colonel Spottiswood took a torch and set fire to the soldiers' huts, so that they might have light to fight by, and thus the struggle was carried on until the native troops fled in dismay.

Colonel Neill, who was in command of the Europeans, acted with promptitude and decision, in having the country round about scoured by his men. While this was being done a telegram arrived from the Viceroy, Lord Canning, commanding the Colonel to march to Allahabad; but the determined man telegraphed back, "Can't do it: wanted here." And at Benares he remained until he felt sure the city was safe from the mutineers.

Less fortunate was Sir Hugh Wheeler at Cawnpore, who also had only two hundred Europeans to oppose to a large force of Natives. This officer unhappily trusted to the friendship of the infamous Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the late Ex-Peishwa of the Mahrattas. Nana had an intense hatred for the English, though he

pretended to be their best friend. However, his true character was revealed on June 5th, when the whole of the native troops at Cawnpore mutinied, and the Prince placed himself at their head. The traitor unfurled two standards: one was announced as that of Mohammed, and the other of Hanuman the monkey-god. Around the first the Mussulmans gathered, and around the second the Hindus.

Sir Hugh Wheeler, with his two hundred soldiers, had not only to hold his position, but to protect three hundred and thirty women and children. He formed an entrenchment at the south-east extremity of the cantonment, and held his ground bravely from the 5th to the 27th of June, against the hordes that attacked him. The spot had been badly chosen, however, for a long siege, and at length he agreed to terms of surrender.

Sir Hugh promised to give up all the stores, money, and guns in the entrenchment; and Nana Sahib solemnly swore not only to allow the garrison to retire unmolested, but to provide means of conveyance for the women and children. On the morning of the 27th the Europeans left the entrenchment and went down to the riverside to embark in the boats provided for their escape. They were permitted to embark, and then, as Marshman says, "was perpetrated one of the most diabolical acts of treachery and murder that the darkest page of human annals records."

A bugle suddenly sounded, and that was the signal for two guns which had been concealed to open fire with grape-shot upon the Europeans. Terrible was

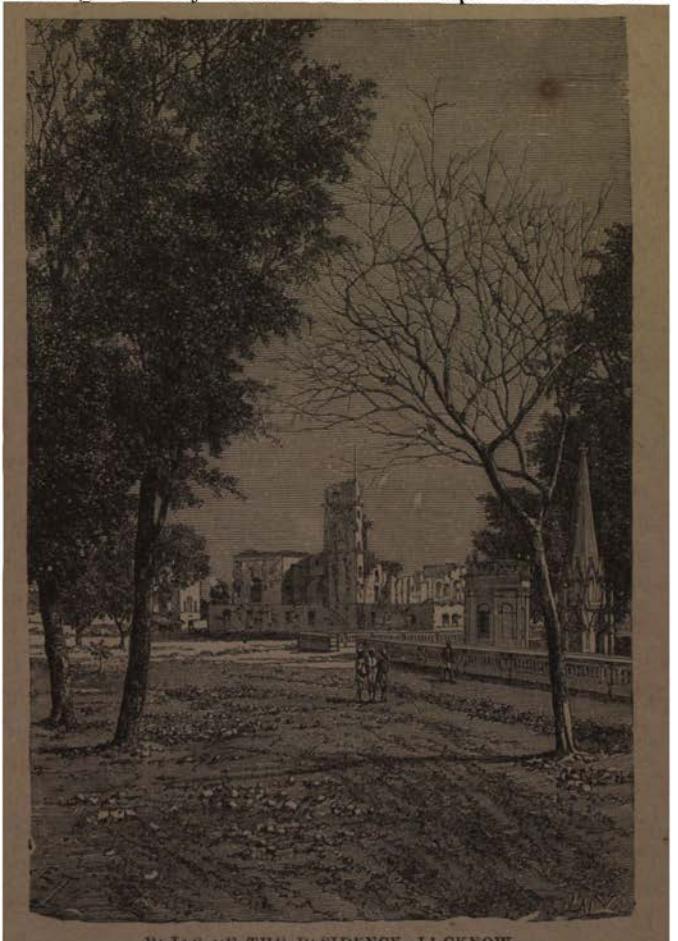
the execution done. The boats were sunk, and numbers perished either from the shot, or from the swords of the rebels, who rode their horses into the stream after them, or from drowning. Still a number of both sexes reached the shore, and then the terrible Nana gave the order that all the men should be killed, but that the women and children should be preserved alive, and taken to his residence for the time being. Sir Hugh Wheeler was the first to fall. Only two officers and two privates eluded the enemy. These men, being magnificent swimmers, managed to get across the river, and after further hair-breadth escapes reached a place of safety.

And what fate befell the helpless women and children? Ah, it is known to all the world! There were two hundred and six of them, and they were placed in a small building not much larger than the Black Hole of Calcutta, and there for a fortnight they remained in the burning heat of an Indian summer.

At the end of that time they found release: but it was the release of death. They were butchered in cold blood. Oh, how could the Nana order their destruction! And how could the soldiers execute the commands of their fierce lord! Thus to slay women and children was to sink to the level of the brute! And when the awful deed was done, the bodies of the slain were thrown into a neighbouring well—a well of sacred memories henceforth.

Not far from Cawnpore is Lucknow, the capital city of Oude, a stronghold of the Mohammedans, and there the storm of war raged fiercely. It was on the

evening of May 30th that the troops mutinied in



RUINS OF THE RESIDENCY, LUCKNOW.

Lucknow; but the wise and gallant Sir Henry Lawrence, who was in command, was ready for the

event, and did all that man could do to nip the insurrection in the bud, but without avail. When he was overpowered by numbers he retired into the Residency, which he had already prepared to stand a siege.

The Residency was simply a large three-storied house, of not more than average strength, and never intended to be a place of refuge in time of war. However, Sir Henry Lawrence had laid in great stores of provision and ammunition against the evil day which he saw was sure to come; and when the storm broke he gathered his little band of nine hundred European soldiers and four hundred and fifty women and children within the walls of the Residency, resolved to make a brave stand against the foe. It is only fair to record also that six or seven hundred native troops proved faithful, and remained with the British, resisting all the entreaties of their comrades, who had mutinied, to desert.

The garrison by which the Residency was defended, therefore, must be put down at sixteen hundred; but against this force was arrayed an army which has been reckoned at not less than fifty thousand, and most of them trained soldiers. The odds were fearful; but Sir Henry Lawrence was undismayed, and imparted courage and resolution to the whole garrison, so that the little band of noble hearts fought and held their ground with almost unexampled courage, week after week, and month after month, waiting for the coming of a rescue party, which they firmly believed the Viceroy would send when he heard of their desperate condition.

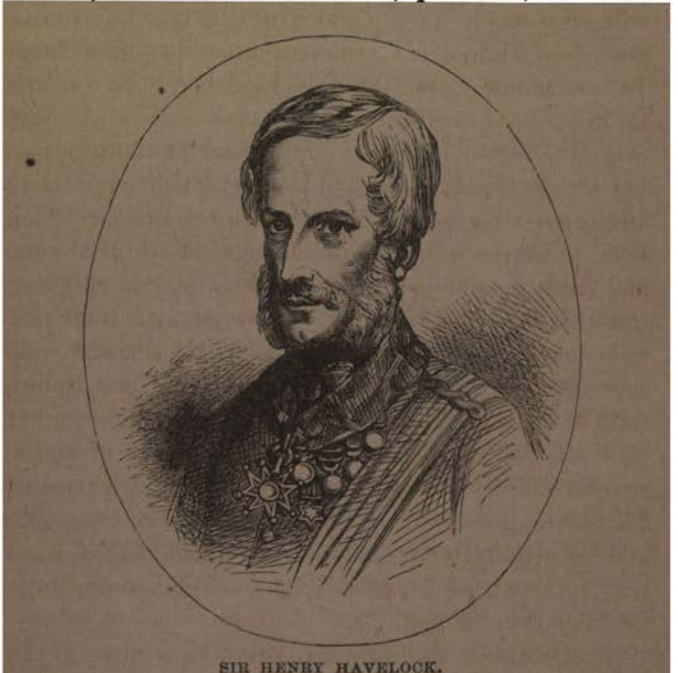
Sad to say, Sir Henry Lawrence was killed within a few days of the commencement of the struggle. A shell from the guns of the foe burst in his room and shattered his thigh. His leg was amputated, but the wound proved fatal; for after lingering two or three days, during which he cheered the officers of his garrison with brave Christian words, and partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, "he fell on sleep."

Almost the last words of the heroic man were, "Bury me without any fuss, and place on my tombstone these words, 'Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty. May the Lord have mercy on his soul.'" The soldiers wept as they carried their commander to his last resting-place, and, raising the sheet which covered the face of the beloved dead, they each stooped down, and reverently kissed him on the forehead a last farewell. It was a touching sight, and would long live in the memory of those who were spared to tell the tale. What an example Sir Henry Lawrence has left to all Englishmen! "England expects every man to do his duty!"

Before referring to the closing events of the Mutiny, I should like to call attention to the conduct of the native Christians throughout that terrible time. With scarcely an exception they remained true to their professions of faith in Christ, though greatly persecuted and sorely tried. They were not well treated even by the British Government in some places; nevertheless they held fast by their baptismal vows.

At Agra, when on July 3rd the Europeans were

gathered into the great fort for protection from the revolted soldiery, the authorities refused admittance to the native Christians, over eight hundred in number; but the Rev. Mr. French, the present Bishop of Lahore, and other missionaries, protested, and said



SIR HENRY HAVELOCK.

that they would remain outside also if their converts were thus shamefully deserted. Then the authorities gave way; and very glad they were afterwards that they had done so, for the native Christians proved most useful as domestic servants and soldiers for the batteries.

There is a story told of a native preacher named Thakur Dass, who lived in a village about twelve miles from Agra. When the other Christians entered the fort this good old man declined to follow them, saying. "I am an old man, and who will kill me? I will stay where I am, and trust in God." Months passed by and no one molested him; but on October 10th some low characters in the neighbourhood resolved to kill him. Calling at his house they made him prisoner, bound him with cords, and led him out to put him to death. The old man still trusted in God, and begged for a moment's respite for prayer, which being granted he prayed for his would-be murderers, and then commended his spirit to his Maker, thinking that his end was at hand. However, at that very moment a tramp of armed men was heard, and with a cry of "The English are coming!" the persecutors took to their heels and left the old man unhurt. It was not the English at all, but a number of native troops. It made no difference, however, for the aged Christian quietly made his way home unmolested; and for years afterwards told with much thankfulness the story of his almost miraculous deliverance from the very jaws of death.

At Delhi, in the general massacre, many of the native Christians perished along with the Europeans, scorning to obtain safety by apostasy. Take the case of Wallayat Ali, a preacher among the Baptists. This man was taken before some of the leading Mussulman officers, who promised that his life would be spared if he would but deny Christ and confess Mohammed; but the brave and devoted Christian answered, "No!

no! a thousand times no! Jesus gave His life for me, and if need be I must give my life for Him."

His trembling wife stood by while this was said, and the next moment Wallayat Ali was slain before her eyes, falling a martyr to the Name which he held to be above every name. Indian Christians have a right to be proud of such *men*, and to hold their memory dear! Verily the native Christians during the days of the Mutiny witnessed a good confession, and made their calling and election sure.

With the fall of Delhi, which was besieged for many weary months by all the British troops that could be gathered together for the emergency—a mere handful compared with the numbers of the enemy—the terrible Mutiny was checked, and the beginning of the end was seen. It was in September of the year 1857 that Delhi fell. With it fell the Moghul empire for ever.

The dishonoured King of Delhi fled with his family to the large building, the tomb of Humayun, a few miles southward of the city; but was followed there by the celebrated Captain Hodson, who made him prisoner, and carried him back to the palace of his ancestors to be tried for his life. The two sons and a grandson of the king were also made prisoners on the following day by the same intrepid officer.

These were the wretches who had caused the European women and children to be murdered in the courtyard of the palace at Delhi. They were sent off, under a guard, to the city; but Captain Hodson seems to have feared a rescue, and so he took the law into his own hands, and slew his prisoners. Writing of

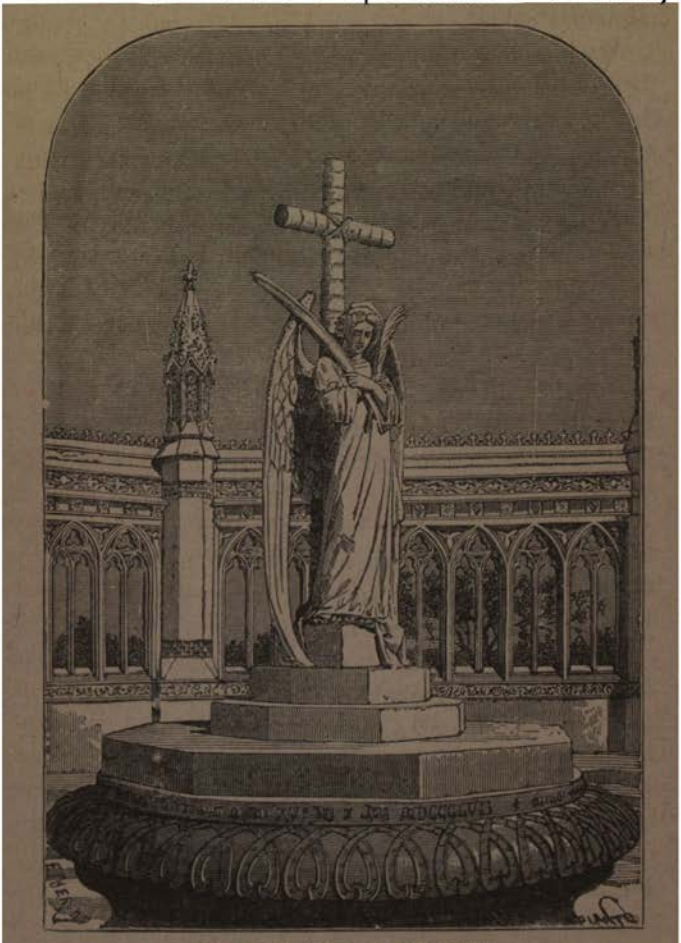
the event he says, "I came up just in time, as a large mob had collected, and were turning on the guard. I rode in among them at a gallop, and in a few words I appealed to the crowd, saying that these were the butchers who had murdered and brutally used helpless females, and that the Government had now sent their punishment; and seizing a carbine I deliberately shot them one after the other." The dead bodies of the princes were taken on to Delhi, and were exposed in the public streets as a terrible warning, and even the Moslems beholding the sight acknowledged the righteous retribution of Allah.

From Delhi the mutineers who escaped fled to Lucknow, the second great Mohammedan city of Northern India, to strengthen the hands of the rebels there.

For many weeks the brave General Havelock had been struggling against innumerable difficulties and dangers in his efforts to destroy the force of Nana Sahib at Cawnpore, and relieve Lucknow. When his victorious troops at last entered Cawnpore it was a pitiful sight they beheld. The well was found into which the victims of Nana's cruelty had been thrown. It was full to the brim of the mangled remains of the dead. "The feelings of those who witnessed the spectacle it is easy to conceive, but difficult to describe. Men of iron nerve, who had during the march from Allahabad rushed to the cannon's mouth, and unappalled had seen their comrades mowed down around them, now lifted up their voices and wept."

The well was reverently covered in, and a beautiful monument has since been erected over it to com-

memorate the fate of the hapless ladies and children,



MEMORIAL WELL, CAWNPORE.

so pitilessly murdered by the infamous Nana Sahib. There is no sadder spot on earth than the garden

at Cawnpore which contains the sepulchre of the Memorial Well.

With hearts almost breaking with sorrow the British troops pushed on to the Residency at Lucknow, which was relieved only just in time, as the brave garrison was reduced to the verge of despair. Still the rebels held the city, and even the united forces of the British were not equal to more than remaining on the defensive, until, in the month of November, Sir Colin Campbell arrived with fresh troops, and a retreat was effected of the whole garrison. It was a brilliant episode, though a gloom was cast over the escaped English by the death of the noble Havelock just outside Lucknow.

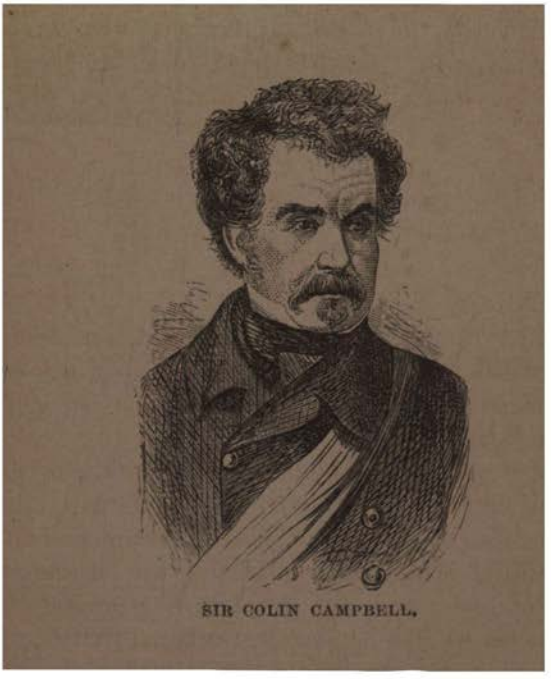
The heroic general was seized with illness brought on by his exertions and anxieties, and had no strength to resist the attack. His last words were, "I die happy and contented. I have for forty years so ruled my life, that when death came I might face it without fear."

For some time after the Relief of Lucknow the Great Rebellion prolonged its existence in different parts of the country, but both Hindus and Mohammedans had lost all hope of ultimate victory. At length the storm died away, and on July 8th, 1859, the Viceroy, Lord Canning, proclaimed peace throughout India. There is no prouder page in the history of England than the story of the way in which a mere handful of British troops triumphed over their foes and put down with a strong hand the Indian Mutiny.

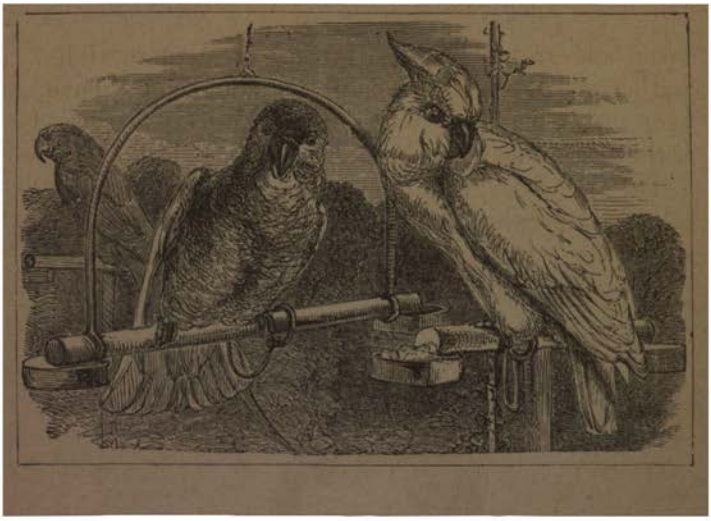
And to-day the people of India, both high and low, rejoice in the just rule of the British Imperial Govern-

ment, and are reaping the benefits of Western civilisation, which would, humanly speaking, never have been theirs, or at any rate not for centuries to come, if the Mutiny had ended otherwise than as it did.

The aim of England ought now to be to set up in the East, by peaceful means, the Kingdom of God's dear Son—a kingdom that can never be moved.



SIR COLIN CAMPBELL.



II.

SACRED BIRDS.

NO one can travel much in India without being struck with the beauty of the birds which fly about so joyously in the rays of the rising or the setting sun.

Almost every variety of birds known to ornithologists may be found in India, either on the plains or in the hill countries. The birds of the plains are perhaps more beautiful in appearance, but they are lacking in the gift of song ; and the power to sing sweetly is after all what we like best in our feathered friends.

It is not my intention in this chapter to deal with the wide subject of Indian birds in general, but only to treat of those for which the people of the East have special regard, and which they characterise as sacred.

The list is not long. Let us commence with the not very beautiful but yet substantial and useful goose. It is strange that in almost every part of the world, and in all ages, the goose has been held in reverence. It was worshipped for ages by the Egyptians, and almost worshipped by the Romans. Augustine says that the respect for the goose displayed by the Romans was due to their gratitude for the service the bird rendered them that night when the Goths attacked Rome, and would have taken the city, but for the warning cries of vigilant geese who acted well the part of watch dogs. In honour of the event, and the bird, the Romans instituted a holy day or yearly holiday, which they called "the Goose's feast."

According to Cæsar, the early Britons held it sinful to eat the flesh of goose; but we think differently now, and especially at Christmas-time, as my young readers well know. The Dutch and the French in the middle ages also held the goose in veneration, believing that the Holy Spirit dwelt in the bird; and therefore they would not allow it to be killed, either in sport or for food. At the present day all superstitious reverence for the goose has died out in the West however, and we have to journey to the East to find adorers of the so-called sacred bird.

Amongst both Hindus and Buddhists the goose is regarded with feelings of religious respect: it is indeed the national emblem emblazoned on the standard of Burmah. Sir Emerson Tennent, in his well-known book on Ceylon, remarks: "Taken in connection with the proverbial contempt for the supposed stolidity of the goose, there is something still unexplained in the

extraordinary honours paid to it by the ancients, and the veneration in which it is held to-day by some of the Eastern nations. The figure that occurs so frequently on Buddhist monuments is the Brahminee goose, which is not a native of Ceylon, but from time immemorial has been the object of veneration there, and in all parts of India."

In Northern India there used to be a Buddhist monastery called the "Goose's monastery," which derived its name, so the story goes, from the self-sacrifice of a goose. It happened thus. One day, when taking exercise in the fields, just outside the monastery gates, a monk saw a flock of geese high in the air; and as he looked at them he thought what a pity it was that they were out of his reach, as he and his brethren were almost at the point of starvation owing to the scarcity of food. As he thought of their dire need, he exclaimed aloud, "Oh, geese, to-day the monks of this holy place are famishing! Will you not have compassion on our circumstances?"

No sooner had the monk thus spoken than the geese gave a cackle, which seemed to signify assent; and lo and behold one of the fattest of the flock fell dead at the feet of the suppliant! The surprised monk ran in to the monastery to tell his brethren, and they all turned out to view the bird which had given its life to appease their hunger. But none of the reverend fathers could bring himself to eat the flesh of the bird regarded as sacred to the great Lord Buddha. It seemed a sacrilege even to think of such a thing, so the dead goose was buried with all honour, and a stupa or monument erected over its body to commemorate its

self-sacrificing deed; and the monastery thenceforward was called "The Goose's Monastery," and the sacred bird was held in greater esteem and honour than ever all over the East.

There is another curious legend told of the Brahminee goose. It is to the effect that for some indiscretion two young people who were lovers were turned into geese, and condemned to pass their nights apart from each other on the opposite banks of a river. All night long each asks in turn if it shall join its mate, and receives a reply in the negative. The female bird calls aloud, "Chakwa, shall I come?" And the male answers, "No, Chakwi." Then the male bird says, "Chakwi, shall I come?" and receives for reply, "No, Chakwa." Thus the night through the forlorn lovers are heard calling to one another, and will call, until time shall be no more. It is the punishment of folly.

There is in India a Brahminee kite as well as a Brahminee goose, which is also held in high esteem. This is not the common or govind kite, but the white-headed bird, sometimes called the eagle of Coromandel. The Brahminee kite is considered an incarnation of the goddess Durga, and is reverenced by the Hindus, who bow to it with great humility every time it passes them in flight.

Even the Mohammedans regard this kite with respect, and believe that by whirling one of these birds round the head of a child on a Tuesday or a Saturday, and then letting it go, great blessings are sure to descend upon the little one. Kites, like crows, are great thieves, and sometimes carry off silver or gold

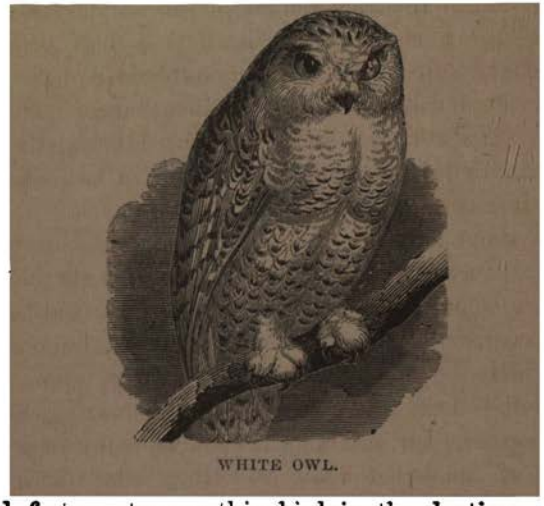
ornaments ; and Moslem women say the reason is because the young kites will not open their eyes till something precious is placed in the nest beside them. Hence the Indian proverb, "The philosopher's stone is in the kite's nest." And truly it would be a more profitable occupation searching kites' nests for gold, than seeking by alchemists' arts to turn base metal into the true thing. Of the Brahminee kite Dr. Adams says, in his "Wanderings of a Naturalist in India": "This kite is a handsome bird of prey. Although wanting the grace and rapidity of flight of the govind-kite, it has the advantage as regards beauty and colouring of plumage. Individuals may be seen frequently swooping on fish in the river, or hovering over the shallows. The head, neck, and irides are white, the rest of the body chestnut."

The peacock is also a sacred bird. In the chapter headed "The Peacock Throne," I have already given an account of this bird, which amongst the Rajputs is held to be sacred to the war-god Kumara. The peacock is said to scream and dance with joy at the sound of thunder, just as a Rajput warrior does at the noise of the kettle drum which calls to war. This bird is also sacred to the Hindu god of beauty, who is generally represented as riding on the back of the peacock.

The peacock, like the kite, is said to be a great thief, but nevertheless it is held in high esteem and regard. It is counted a great crime, as many a sportsman has found in India to his cost, to shoot a peacock ; and yet in some parts of the North-West Provinces the bird is a great nuisance to the farmers,

who have a saying that "the monkey, the partridge, and the peacock rob the field of its store." As sacred birds, however, peacocks have a licence to rob as much as they like. Thus does religious superstition stand in the way of national prosperity in the East.

The white owl is considered sacred, though the common owl is a bird of ill omen. The white owl is believed to bring good luck, and it is considered great



WHITE OWL.

good fortune to see this bird in the daytime. The white owl is held sacred to Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity; and the people of India are delighted if an owl or owls will condescend to build in their houses. In lonely country places old houses are often infested with these birds, who establish their quarters in dark nooks and corners, and breed twice a year, producing five or six young ones at a time. The screeching and shrieking that goes on is of course

something wonderful to hear, but it is endured, and even counted sweet music, for luck's sake. The common belief is that no evil will come nigh a house where a white owl lives. Experience, however, does not justify faith in the superstition.

Perhaps the most famous of Indian sacred birds is the one styled Garuda, who is called "the King of Birds." He only exists, however, in the Hindu sacred books, and in the imagination of the people. Garuda is a mythical being, and is described as half man and half eagle. He has the head and wings of a bird, while the rest of his body is like that of a human being. He is always associated with the god Vishnu, being indeed the carrier of the god when he wishes to move from place to place.

Garuda is worshipped at the great Hindu festivals at the same time as Vishnu. His image may be found also in many temples, and he is regarded as the guardian deity of the strong and the brave, who must repeat his name daily. Garuda is represented as having done many daring and wonderful things, such as carrying in his beak a huge trunk of a tree on which some people were sitting, while with one claw he held a tortoise and with the other an elephant. Another exploit was to capture the moon and conceal it under his wing. But his most marvellous deed was entering the heavenly abode of the god Indra, and in spite of all opposition capturing the sacred Amrita, the drink of the gods. On account of these events the bird is spoken of as

> "King Garud blest beyond compare
> Of birds who wing the fields of air.

Are not such tales absurd? Yet the religious books of the Hindus relate them with all seriousness and at great length.

There is one story concerning Garuda the king of birds that is more sensible than the rest, and this my young readers may like to hear. It is as follows :—

On a certain day Garuda, with a friendly Brahmin priest, alighted on the peak of a mountain, where they found a celebrated female ascetic named Candili, living apart from the world, and practising all kinds of bodily mortifications. Seeing this good lady, Garuda and his friend saluted her reverently and received her blessing. Candili then asked concerning their welfare, gave them seats, and set food before them, and herself waited upon them as a servant. So kind was the hospitable lady, so amiable, and withal so beautiful, notwithstanding her fastings and other austerities, that Garuda fell in love with her, and while he should have slept that night he lay awake forming the wicked resolve to bear away the lovely lady by force, on his strong wings, next morning.

But lo! when the day broke, the king of birds found that his wings on which he depended for flight had fallen off. And a very pitiable object he presented. When his companion the priest beheld the sad plight of his friend he was distressed; and after expressing his sympathy, asked how it was that this evil had come to pass—"Surely thou hast been harbouring an evil thought in thy mind?" Then Garuda confessed that he had purposed the ruin of the fair lady who had treated them so graciously when they alighted on the mountain.

"Confess thy fault," said the priest, "if haply thou mayest be forgiven and regain thy proper form." Then Garuda approached their hostess Candili, expressed his contrition, and prayed for pardon, which was freely granted. The gracious lady said, "Fear not, O thou of beautiful feathers; resume thy wings and cast off thy fears, and learn this lesson: that purity of conduct beareth virtue as its fruit—it is purity that bringeth on prosperity—it is purity that driveth away all signs of evil. Go thou whithersoever thou dost wish. Never more entertain low thoughts of me, and take care thou dost not despise women who may be truly blamable. Reverence womankind." At these words Garuda had his wings again, and they became even stronger than before, and he went on his way with a light and happy heart.

We may regard this story as a parable, and it teaches us that we lose our wings—that is our strength, and energy, and peace of mind—when we cherish unholy thoughts or desires; and that we only regain them when we humbly acknowledge our transgressions and are forgiven, and resolutely turn away from evil. The Hindu Shastars beautifully say in one place, "Convert thy body into a temple, give up evil thoughts, and see God with thine internal eye. The source of final happiness is in the heart. Be chaste. Neither sacred Scriptures, religious ceremonies, pious austerities, the offering of sacrifices, nor liberality, will procure felicity to a man contaminated with sensuality. Virtue and vice are heaven and hell."

Garuda, the king of birds, is believed to be the

great enemy of snakes, and on this account, as well as for the reasons already given, he is regarded with favour by the Hindus. The common people of India repeat the name of Garuda three times when in the fields, and before going to sleep at night, as a safeguard against snakes.

Garuda is said to have left as offspring two sons, half men and half bird, like himself. Their names are Sampati and Jaytayus, and these mythical birds also are regarded as sacred by the Hindus. Being puffed up with pride on account of their father's exploits, and at the thought of their own strength, these two once determined to fly right into the face of the sun. However, as was to have been expected, they failed in the mad enterprise, and Sampati's wings were burnt off, and thus was he crippled for life, showing by sad example the truth of the saying, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Jaytayus perished more nobly, being killed by Ravana, the demon-king of Ceylon, whom he bravely but vainly sought to hinder from carrying off Sita the fair wife of Rama, in the absence of the latter from home. Sampati and Jaytayus are worshipped in India at the festival of the sun, and also at the festival of Rama and other gods.

There are other birds held in special regard in the East, though I scarcely know whether they are called "sacred" or not. There is the pretty little bird designated "the bird of the lost money," because it utters in a low tone something that sounds like "Oh that we had kept it!" Ever as it flies about in the still evening air the plaintive cry is heard, "Oh that

we had kept it!" "Oh that we had kept it!" There is a tradition that its ancestors were a man and his wife, who, having lost their wealth by thoughtless speculation, died broken-hearted, and were transformed into these little birds, to be a constant warning to the Hindus against investing their money carelessly. And the warning is needed all the world over.

Pigeons are great favourites both with the Hindus and the Moslems. They are kept in the house, and are supposed to preserve buildings from decay. Turtle-doves also are looked upon as harbingers of good luck, and are treated with great kindness. They are such gentle creatures that I do not know how any one could hurt them. There were two always in my garden in Calcutta, and I never heard their coo-coo-cooing without pleasure. These gentle creatures speak to us of true affection and enduring love.

Parrots also are favourite birds, and are often kept in the house as pets. There is a bird called the papiya, of the parrot species, which is said to cry, "My eye is going!" from the legend that once a man seeing some wicked deeds done before his eyes, died of terror, uttering the words, "My eye is going!" and was transformed into a bird. Some people are afraid, and it is well that they are, to do anything wrong before a papiya, lest it should betray them. If such had the fear of God before their eyes it would be better still.

One of my predecessors in the pastorate of Union Chapel, Calcutta, Dr. Boaz, a lovable man, and a most successful minister of the Gospel, had a great affection for birds, and especially for parrots. Let

me quote an extract from his Memoirs edited by his widow, who writes: "Dr. Boaz had a favourite parrot, whose note was harsh and discordant, but when about to repeat his daily vocabulary—viz., Papa, Mamma, Padri Boaz, Union Chapel, Dick, Tom, Alick, he would soften his voice, and imitate his master's in a manner the most ludicrous.

TURTLE DOVES.

"Just as the old year of 1860 was bidding us adieu, and we were waiting to greet the new year, Polly walked out of his cage, mounted the table, and, with wings outstretched, exhibiting his gay robes of scarlet hue, as if he, too, must come out in holiday attire, he promenaded with a proud bearing, as if lord of all he surveyed, helping himself freely to his favourite

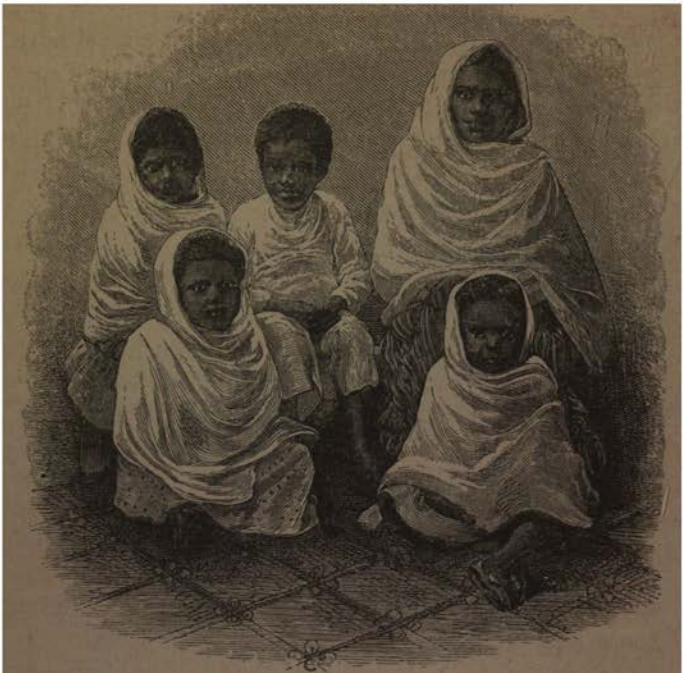
dishes. The general remark was that we never saw Polly make himself so agreeable. The boys said, 'Oh, but he knows papa has come home to keep a merry Christmas with us.' Next day this beautiful creature was seen lying shivering in a fit, with ruffled plumage, and a look so pitiful that, had he spoken, we could not have more distinctly understood that he sought for sympathy.

"Polly was removed to the fireside, and laid on the hearthrug. It was distressing to witness his agony, which, however, was of short duration, for his pretty little head soon dropped, and there he lay dead. The father's tears were mingled with those of his sons. A relative standing by remarked, 'Surely you don't mean to weep so for a bird?' His reply was, 'You know my nature: I cannot help it. Has the parrot not been with us in all our joys and sorrows, and been the companion of the boys by land and sea? I fear it will not be the only death among us this year.'"

The last remark, alas! proved prophetic, for in October of the same year Dr. Boaz himself was suddenly taken from time into eternity.

There is something very attractive about birds; and all who live in India, whether Europeans or natives, seem to love the birds of the country, with perhaps one or two exceptions, about which more later on when I come to write of household and other pests.

It is sad, however, to think of human beings worshipping birds, as the Hindus do. It is a custom dishonouring to God, and degrading to man!



IN THE CHRISTIAN GIRLS' SCHOOL, AGRA.

III.

GIRL-LIFE.

THERE is a common saying in India which throws a flood of light upon girl-life; it is, "Better to be a clod than to have been born a woman." Truly the lot of females in the East is hard!

When more than one daughter is born in a family, the father, in all probability, will be heard to say,

"What great sin have I committed that I should have another daughter?" And if a man in trouble of any kind is seen sitting about in a dejected mood, he is nearly sure to be greeted by a neighbour with the proverb, "Why do you sit as if a girl had been born at home?"

Girls are not counted when parents tell you how many children they have. Commenting on this custom, the Rev. W. J. Wilkins, in his "Daily Life and Work in India," says: "I was greatly surprised the first time I noticed this. Calling upon a native gentleman I asked him what family he had. 'I have two children,' he said. A little time after, seeing a little girl coming to sit on his knee, while the two boys were playing about, I asked who the little girl was. 'She is my daughter,' he said. 'But,' I replied, 'you said you had only two children. This makes a third.' The gentleman remarked, 'I said I had two children—there they are: this is only a girl!'"

"Only a girl!" Is it not too bad to speak of girls in that fashion? It must not be supposed, however, that Hindu parents do not love their girls, though they speak disparagingly of them. Of course they love them! How can they help loving the dear little mites? Yet it remains a fact, that, at heart, the fondest father wishes that his girl had been a boy. Boys are always welcome, no matter how many may arrive on the scene. Indeed the Hindus have a prayer to the effect, "May the gods give us seven wise sons, but only two handsome daughters."

At a very early age girls are separated from boys in the better class homes of India. At seven or eight

girls find that boys will not condescend to play with them for fear of being teased. Thus girls are left to the companionship of their own sex until they are married, but they do not seem to mind.

With regard to recreation, a native writer, Mr. Shoshee Chunder Dutt, says: "The sports and pastimes of girls are dissimilar to those of boys. Now and then, indeed, they are found indulging in amusements common to both sexes. Girls are occasionally seen chasing each other; oftener still, playing hide-and-seek with bandaged eyes, and with as much eagerness as boys. But these impetuous diversions are not legitimately their own. The relaxations that belong to girls especially are of a more sedentary character, and are also more ingenious; and their toys, for the most part representing men, women and children, engross all their attention. The boys—mischievous as they are in all parts of the world, and naturally prone to play pranks—get out of the nursery as soon as they are allowed. But the girls are ever fond of nestling under the mother's wings at home. They are not wanting in the playful gaiety of childhood, but there is not much of active energy in them, and no self-reliance. The daughter's elbow leans ever on the mother's breast. Mothers necessarily retain over their daughters the greatest authority—much greater than what they retain over their sons."

Speaking of the training of girls, Mr. Dutt says: "Dancing, riding, and singing are objected to as improper accomplishments; but sweeping the house, cleaning the utensils of the family, and even assisting at cookery are taught them as part of the training

necessary for fulfilling the duties they are bound to. The labour thus imposed preserves girls from becoming useless and indolent, and gives full exercise even to the strongest, improving both appearance and health. Pale cheeks and a languid aspect are rare among women in India, while active habits and alertness of mind are quite common among them. Clean-limbed and agile, a girl of ten years may be seen daily performing duties without fatigue which would almost require a labourer to get through ; and there is no doubt that the discharge of these callings goes far to accomplish those ends which are elsewhere sought to be secured by backboards and dancing."

With respect to education, girls have been sadly neglected in India for centuries. Until within the last forty years or so it was considered a sin to teach girls to read and write. So strong was the prejudice that no man would marry a girl who was at all educated, it being believed that the knowledge of the wife would shorten the life of her husband. A Brahmin gentleman, who was once asked by a missionary what he considered a woman ought to know, replied, "She must know two things. First, she must know the way to the bazaar to buy necessaries for the house ; and, secondly, she must know the nearest way from the bazaar home again." It is estimated that ninety out of every hundred girls of ten years of age in India are entirely uneducated. Is not such ignorance deplorable ?

Of late years there has been an effort in cities, and to some extent also in country places, to improve this sad state of things. Missionaries have been the chief

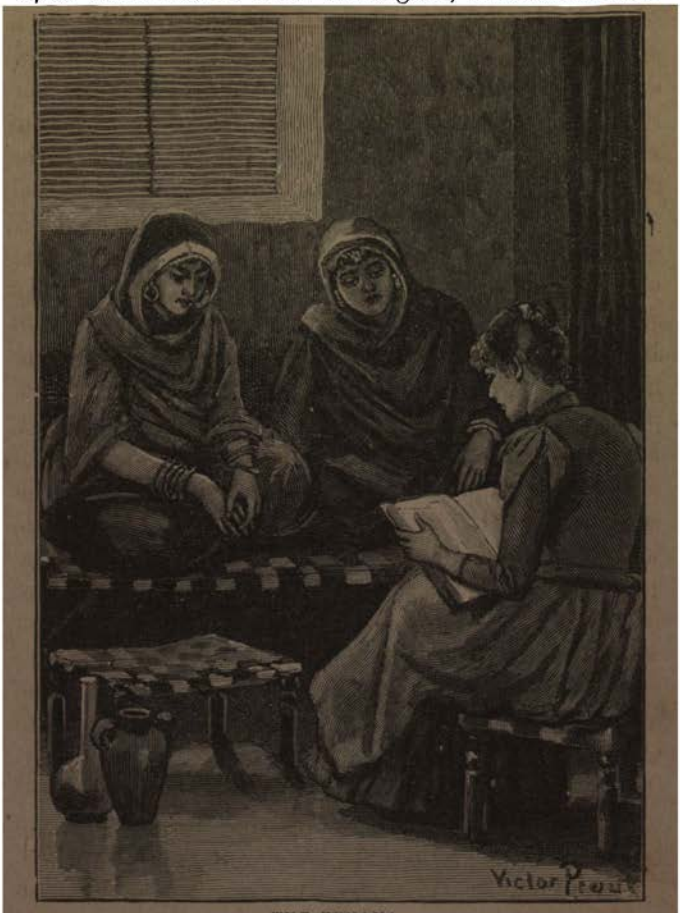
agents in this reform, which has been very successful, though of course as yet only a few girls have been reached out of the many millions that need to be educated.

It was very difficult at first to get parents to consent to send their girls to school. The older women especially were opposed to it, and declared that their gods would be very angry with them if they allowed their girls to be educated, as ignorance was the heritage of the sex. For a time only the poor and low-caste would permit their daughters to be taught, and these had to be paid to come to school. However, as the advantages of education were perceived the prejudice grew less pronounced, and girls of all castes are now found in mission schools. "The schools are situated generally in a quiet lane or street in the middle of a Hindu village or suburb. Sometimes schools are built for the purpose, sometimes rooms are rented in Hindu houses. The girls attend from the time they are about six, until they are eleven or twelve years of age."

The education is, of course, only elementary in these village schools, and the teachers are content if the girls when they leave can read, write, and sew nicely. When in India I visited many girls' schools, and was greatly pleased with the diligence of the scholars, and their evident delight in their new accomplishments. I found some of them reading those excellent lesson books, the "Line upon Line" series, and all seemed to have a very fair knowledge of the Bible, and especially of the Gospel stories.

As an example of the religious impression made

upon the minds of these schoolgirls, I would mention



THE ZENANA.

(By permission of the British and Foreign Bible Society.)

an incident related to me by Miss Heysham, superintendent of girls' schools in connection with the

work of the London Missionary Society in the suburbs of Calcutta. "One of my little girls," said Miss Heysham, "who was married, and was leaving the district in all probability never to return, sent for me to say good-bye. I went, and in course of conversation said to her, 'I should like to give you some little token to keep in remembrance of me. What would you like best?' She replied, 'There is no need to give me anything, for I shall never forget you.' On being pressed she said, 'Give me an English Bible, and write my name in it.' 'But you cannot read English well enough to understand it,' I remarked. She said, 'I will ask my husband to read and explain it to me.' That girl loved the Holy Scriptures. May they make her wise unto salvation!"

Miss Heysham has had many years of experience in connection with girls' schools, and has done a noble work for Christ amongst the young, both by precept and example. It is specially interesting, therefore, to hear what she has to say with regard to the work to which she has devoted her life. In a recent report of her work Miss Heysham contrasted the present position of girls' schools and the education of girls with what it was only ten years ago. She says: "Then, though a nominal fee had been started, many who pleaded poverty had to be supplied with books; now such a thing as giving a book or even a slate pencil is not heard of. Then, teachers had to send in search of children, and found great difficulty in getting their parents to consent to send them to school; now, the parents in many cases send the children with the entrance fee for the month, and money for books and

slates. There used to be a superstition that if girls were taught to read and write they would soon become widows; now it is just the contrary: the first question put by a match-maker is, does the girl know how to read and write? If she does not the match-maker leaves the house and goes off in search of one who does. Only last week I heard of an interesting case. A father in search of a wife for his son, heard of a girl who is being educated in our Kalighat School. As is the custom, the match-maker was sent to see this girl and report on her, the result being that the father of the boy with two other friends went to see the girl; the former said he wished to examine her and see how far she was educated. After he had done so, he turned to her father and said, 'Sir, I do not want a pice from you: I only want your daughter.'

"It was the custom ten years ago to speak disparagingly of parents who sent their daughters to school; now the custom is to find fault with those who do not. In place of dirty faces, and still dirtier dresses, we now see every child coming to school with a clean face, combed hair, and pretty jacket and sari. Formerly it was immaterial to parents whether their children came to school with their lessons prepared or not; now in the majority of cases care is taken that the children come to school with their lessons prepared; and where there is any carelessness at home, a complaint is sent to me to that effect, with a request that I should punish the child. It is an acknowledged fact that girls who have been educated in our schools make better wives and mothers than those who have not."

Miss Heysham may certainly be congratulated on her work, and it is but a type of what is going on all over India. The scarcity of competent teachers is now the only serious drawback to the rapid progress of the good work. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest."

One of the first to engage in this enterprise of educating native girls was the devoted missionary lady, Mrs. Mullens, who laboured in Calcutta some fifty years ago. Her efforts, however, were mostly confined to the children of native Christians, but amongst these she toiled lovingly, assiduously, and very successfully. And through her Christian girls Mrs. Mullens was able, to some extent, to reach the non-Christians.

Writing of her work in May 1850, Mrs. Mullens mentions a very pleasing instance that is worth recording. It shows how even at that time labour spent over the girls of India was well spent. The passage runs: "It was only a few weeks since that I found out that one of my little girls loved the Bible, and prized Christianity very much. She is, perhaps, the last I should have expected to do so, for she is very quiet, and not at all clever, and I never could find out what her thoughts were. But a little while ago she went to spend a month with a good Christian woman I know. When little Batasy came home the other day I had such a nice account of her. Mary, the woman with whom she lived, told me that she never let a day pass without reading her Bible, and

she used often to ask her the meaning of different passages. One day she reproved Mary's master, a rich native gentleman, for telling a lie in fun, saying that all falsehood was hateful in the sight of God. He was not offended, but patted her head and replied, 'Yes, my little girl, you are right and I am wrong; I must not do so again.'

"Another time an idolatrous procession passed the door. Batasy exclaimed, 'Oh! I wish the people would leave off worshipping these idols.' A Brahmin overheard the remark and said, 'And who are you, you little girl, that you speak so disrespectfully of the gods of your country?' 'I am a Christian child,' replied Batasy. 'My God fills heaven and earth. He made everything; but you have made your idol yourself with the mud of the Ganges, and then you have bowed down to it and worshipped it, but it cannot help you.' 'And how do you know all that?' asked the Brahmin. Whereat the little girl said, 'I have read it in the Bible, the Christian's Shastar.' 'What!' exclaimed the Brahmin, 'a child like you read the Shastars!' 'Yes! yes!' she answered, 'and though I am a little child, I could tell you of a Saviour who could save you from your sins.' But the Brahmin, perceiving what turn the conversation was about to take, passed on, saying, 'No! no! I will not argue with a child.'" How true is the Scripture, "A little child shall lead them!"

From South India there has reached me a story of the good that girls' schools are now doing. It is a tale for the little ones, related by Mrs. Haines of Ballary, who says: "One little girl, named Neelammah,

who attended the Canarese school, openly confessed her love to Jesus. She would not pray to idols though urged to do so by her mother. She was most regular in her attendance while she was able, and told Mary, the Bible woman, that it was a great delight to her to come. All through her last illness she was very patient, and more than once expressed her faith in Jesus. When asked if she were afraid to die, she said, 'No, Jesus loves me, and I am going to see Him.' Not long after Neelammah's death I was questioning some of the Canarese girls on their Bible lesson, which was about Christ choosing His disciples. I asked them if Jesus had any disciples now. They said 'Yes!' eagerly. Then I asked, 'Do you know any?' One little girl immediately replied, to my astonishment, 'Yes, Neelammah is His disciple.' And when asked how she knew this, she replied simply, 'Because Neelammah loved Jesus.'"

When I was Editor of the *Indian Missionary*, the organ of the London Missionary Society in India, I received one day a communication which gave me very great pleasure. It related to a wee Hindu child, called Sukhiya, who lived in the neighbourhood of Benares. The communication was simply signed R., but I knew who had written it. I do not think it is any breach of faith to say that it was from a young missionary lady of the London Missionary Society, since retired from India, who wields a facile pen. Let me give the story here, for I am sure my readers, young and old, will be delighted with it. The communication was as follows:—

"My little Sukhiya! Let me show her to you. Only a tiny Hindu child, the pet of the village where she lived. With a round bonny face and big eyes, and close black hair over her round head, and brown limbs so plump and babyish. A questioning way of looking at you, which dissolved into a smile and a chuckle of delight, and a display of white, even little teeth, when you turned to look at her. Never still, except latterly when in pain—and then, oh! the sad little face of hers!

"She came to school, my Hindu school, one of the very first, and was so frightened that nothing would induce her to stay, till the singing pleased her; and though to the end she could never talk plainly, she would repeat in her baby way all the lessons that the other children learned. You should have heard her, standing up with joined hands, bent head, and peeping eyes, saying, in her own language, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' All the native hymns she learned easily too; she was not to be left behind by the other children. Indeed she surpassed many of them; her memory seemed very acute. I could never get her to read, but she would repeat such hymns as 'The sweet story of old,' and best of all 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.' Her multiplication table she could say up to five times, and many things besides.

"Poor little Sukhiya! Now and then she would get sleepy in school and say, 'Let me sit beside my sister,' and would go up and lay her head on her elder sister's knee, and fall sound asleep, only to wake, rub her eyes, and laugh again when school was over.

Now and then she was full of mischief, would come and sit by me on the floor with her book of letters, and softly pull my dress, or pass her soft little fingers over my feet, and then look up in my face and laugh. She would sometimes come to school in her mother's big *chádar*, much too long, of course, for such a wee mite, and she would amuse herself with standing up and winding it in the most approved method over her head and round her little body, vainly trying to get rid of its voluminous folds, tucking them in at the waist in front after the fashion of Indian women's costume. She had a print jacket with the rest last Christmas (she will have something fairer and better this year I know—a pure white robe—and I think I see the happy smile on her sweet face as she thanks the Giver), but Sukhiya soon spoiled hers, playing, and it had to be washed in the village tank (none of the cleanest, the plague spot of the place), and the colour went out, so that the child discarded it. But in general she went about only in Nature's simplest garb, guiltless of jacket or shawl.

"She would follow me up the bazaar when I left school, and only a passing cart or herd of buffaloes would scare her. She used to run and touch me, and away to the other side, back again, and dare me once more. The other children would not have done it. Sukhiya knew that I loved her, that every one loved her, dear little happy soul! Then they pierced her ears: 'It was the custom,' they said—and the sores festered. They put black stuff on them, and never washed the little thing. She got fever and became very weak. One Sunday afternoon she was asleep

early all service-time; her grandmother said she had been awake all the night before with pain. I did long to take her away and nurse her in my own home; but it was impossible.

INDIAN EAR-ORNAMENTS.

"When, after much suffering, her ears got better, and the smile once more brightened her sad face, she caught the measles prevalent in the village; she rallied from this complaint, but only to catch a chill, which brought on the illness from which she died. I was away for a time, and, returning, did not find out how ill she was; and, seeking for her one day in school, was told that she had died just two days before. If I had only known! It seems so strange without her; the school-house is altered, the lessons have lost much of their interest! Dear little girl! I wonder if one day we shall see you again, and you will have learnt the meaning of the words you sang so heartily here. The whole village wept aloud for Sukhiya. 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven!'"

Girls in India are married very early, far too early, in fact, and this is one of the crying evils of their lot. Fancy being married at five or six years of age!—and

that is not at all uncommon, though girls do not go to live with their husbands until they are eleven or twelve. Child-marriage is, in the opinion of many, the curse of India, both physically and morally. Boys and girls, it must be understood, have no choice in the matter of marriage. It is considered a disgrace to remain single, and long before they even know what marriage means, they are, as a rule, married, their parents having settled things for them. The consent of the parties vitally interested is never even thought of, and they must take each other "for better, for worse," just as their parents decide. As for love, the rule is in India, "Marry first and love will come after," and generally speaking it does, at any rate on the side of the young wife, who is said to be devotedly affectionate to her lord and master.

> "Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
> She darkly feels him great and wise,
> She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
> 'I cannot understand: I love.'"

Marriage interferes greatly with the education of a girl. With her marriage, say at the latest when she is twelve years of age, she must give up going to school, and it is not often that the husband has either time or inclination to teach his young wife at home. And then the cares of family life multiply, and very often all desire to learn more dies out of the breast of the girl-wife and mother. Yet the knowledge they have received in mission schools must be a great blessing to young wives in various ways—a help to them in their duties, and a comfort in their hours of depression.

A girl belonging to the middle and upper classes of society at marriage is lost to the world, for she is immured in her house, and not allowed thereafter to look upon the face of man, other than her husband and his younger brothers. This custom the Hindus learned from the Moslems. It is a custom that prevails almost all over India, though in some parts the rules of seclusion are more strict than in others. It is a custom that makes life very monotonous for ladies, and especially for those who, though married, are but girls.

The seclusion of women in India has given rise to a special kind of missionary enterprise called Zenana Missions, in which gentlemen can take no part. The word Zenana simply means "a woman," and Zenana work, therefore, is mission work as carried on amongst women in the homes of Hindus and Mohammedans. Mrs. Mullens, already referred to, was practically the originator of this form of work, though others had thought of it, and one or two, notably Miss Bird, had even obtained admittance into a few homes to teach privately. Mrs. Mullens, however, began Zenana work on a systematic basis, with the firm resolve under God's blessing of making the work permanent, and drawing other missionary ladies into it. It was designed to follow up the teaching of the school in the home, in the case of those girls who, at their marriage, had been obliged to leave school.

The girls themselves had something to do with the starting of the enterprise, for some of them had said to Mrs. Mullens, "As we cannot come to school any longer, cannot you visit us?" "Certainly," was the

reply, "if your husbands will permit me." To obtain consent was no light matter, as, apart from the question of education, native gentlemen seemed afraid of the consequences if they permitted Europeans, even ladies, to pass within the sacred precincts of the Zenana. The elder women also were stoutly opposed to the scheme, and foretold all kinds of calamities if the innovation was permitted.

However, a start was made by Mrs. Mullens in two or three houses, and though it was anything but agreeable or encouraging work, yet it was persevered in, and by degrees it grew in favour, and other missionary ladies were drawn in, and houses began to open on every side in Calcutta, and other places, until to-day Zenana work is counted the most promising, perhaps, of the many forms of missionary enterprise in India.

The ladies connected with the London Missionary Society in Calcutta alone visit in about three thousand houses. Who can compute the number of Zenanas visited now daily all over India by European ladies and their native assistants? Truly a good work is thus being done amongst the women of India, and Hinduism is being undermined in the very citadel of its strength—the home. And more workers are urgently needed in this special field of labour.

Miss Fletcher of Calcutta, speaking of Zenana work, says that it is now almost entirely Gospel teaching, as the Bible is the chief text book, and is varied by readings from the "Peep of Day," and kindred publications of a Christian character. The girls of the household, the young wives who in age are but girls,

and the older women, all alike now seem eager to receive instruction.

I might here give Miss Fletcher's account of the way in which the work is carried on in Calcutta. "On entering a house, after the ordinary greetings, we sing a hymn, which usually draws all the women of the house together. It is seldom our singing is stopped, but sometimes a poor little timid wife is afraid it might disturb her husband who is at home, and she thinks that for that day we had better only have the Bible lesson. As a rule we cannot satisfy the women, for I believe they would listen to any number of hymns. The other day I went to a house and sang two hymns, but I was not let off so easily, for the *bow* (girl-wife) said, 'What, do you really mean that that is all the singing I am to have? I want six more hymns at least!' I was amused, and sang two more, and told her if I did all she wished, I should certainly have no voice left for anybody else. Sometimes we get as many as ten or fifteen women all seated round us, and then we begin the Bible teaching. We seldom have fewer than three or four at one time.

"We usually have attentive listeners, but sometimes the babies begin to cry, and so the mothers have to go away; and sometimes two of them will enter into a lively conversation, and rather hinder us; and then again sometimes they get so excited defending their own religion that for that day our lessons remain unfinished. The girl-wives, and the older ones too, like to talk to us about themselves, and we encourage them to do so, for we want them

to feel that we are their friends, and are interested in all that concerns them. Sometimes the babies are ill, and we are asked what is the best thing to do for them; and perhaps a relation has died, and they like our sympathy; a daughter is married, and we must congratulate them; and in many other ways like these we are able to show our interest in them."

Mrs. Hewlett, of Benares, in an account which she wrote for the *Indian Missionary* of Zenana work in the Sacred City of the Hindus, says: "In the seclusion of the Benares Zenanas there appears to be a growing inclination to receive instruction; the Zenana visitor is now not only admitted but generally welcomed as a friend. The Gospel message she brings is often listened to with deep attention. Needlework and fancy work have still the most attraction for these Indian ladies, at least until they have made some progress in their studies; then the needlework ceases to be so engrossing. The plan we generally adopt in teaching is to give lessons in needlework when the other lessons for the day are over.

"The ladies of Benares are more secluded than those in other parts of India, and the greater number of Zenanas open to us are not those belonging to what would be called the aristocracy, but to the poorer classes. In visiting some of the houses of the principal native gentlemen of the city with my husband,* I have often expressed a wish to see the ladies of the families, and am always told that some arrangement will shortly be made for me to see them. But these promises are

* Rev. John Hewlett, M.A., a most talented and devoted missionary, who died in February 1892.

rarely fulfilled—only the other day we were invited to a Mohammedan wedding, and I fondly imagined that I should be able to see the ladies of the house; but no, the ladies were not even to be seen. The house was beautifully furnished and brilliantly lighted, we were very courteously received by the father of the bridegroom, and introduced to the bridegroom and all his friends; but when I expressed a wish to see the girl-bride I was informed that she could not appear until the ceremony was over. Very strange to our English idea—is it not?—that the bride should not be present at her own wedding."

Though it is generally speaking true that ladies of the higher ranks of Indian society seldom come under the influence of missionaries, yet now and again this does take place. The Rev. James Kennedy, M.A., who laboured so long and so faithfully in India, mentions a case in his book entitled "Life and Work in Benares and Kumaon." He says, "A daughter of the late Rajah of Coorg, a state prisoner at Benares, was for a time under the tuition of Mrs. Kennedy. She was brought daily to our house, sat with us at table, and was taught with our children. The Rajah wished her to be brought up as a Christian. Eventually she was brought to England, baptised by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Queen standing sponsor, and was married to an English officer. However, she survived her marriage only a very short time."

The sad lot of girl-widows in India has of late been much commented upon. As women are married so very young, it, of course, often happens that they are left widows long before they are out of their

teens. It is estimated that there are over twenty-one millions of widows in India, and of these no fewer than sixty thousand are under ten years of age, and fifteen and a half millions are between ten and twenty years of age. And these millions of girl-widows are forbidden to marry again. Once a widow always a widow, in India. It is true that the Indian Government has passed a law legalising widow-remarriage, but the people generally count it as a dead letter, and will not sanction second marriages on the part of females, though a man may marry as often as he pleases, and have as many wives as he likes.

And the poor girl-widows are treated badly in other ways. Immediately their husbands die, "they are deprived of their ornaments—in which they so much delight—and of the use of coloured garments, and of their long hair. They are also reproached as unfortunate, and cruelly debarred as accursed of the gods from assisting in domestic religious ceremonials." And during the rest of their life, whether it be short or long, they are under a cloud. They can take no part in gaieties, are allowed no ornament on the person, no food may pass their lips save once a day, and on the monthly fast days they are not allowed food or water from sunrise to sunset. Oh, the pity of it!

Mrs. Duthie, in a report of her work amongst the silk-weaver women of Nagercoil in Travancore, mentions the sad case of a young widow she knew. Writing of her school this missionary lady says: "Of the seventeen girls who are learning, several are married, and will soon be leaving to live in their

husbands' houses. If in the case of any one of them the husband should die before the poor girl, the latter will be doomed to perpetual widowhood. We have one such case—a nice, thoughtful young woman. Her story is touching, which is, 'I am a widow and an orphan. According to the custom of our caste I was married in my sixth year. Unhappily, a few days after my husband was taken ill and died. I did not know of this until my parents told me. The cruel custom of our country compels me to remain a widow all my life, though I do not remember to have seen my husband's face. For long I have suffered much, and have been a stranger to peace of mind. How glad I am now to be able to read! My books are a great comfort to me.'"

Ere closing this chapter I must refer, however briefly, to medical work among the women of India. The inmates of Zenanas, even the girl-wives, are not allowed to have a male doctor in attendance; no, not even one of their own co-religionists. Sometimes the doctor may speak to the patient from behind a curtain, and there have been cases known of women putting their tongues through a slit in the curtain, for the medical man to judge as to the state of health. As a rule, however, the suffering ones have to trust themselves in the hands of old women, who have gained a reputation in the healing art, or they have to go unattended altogether.

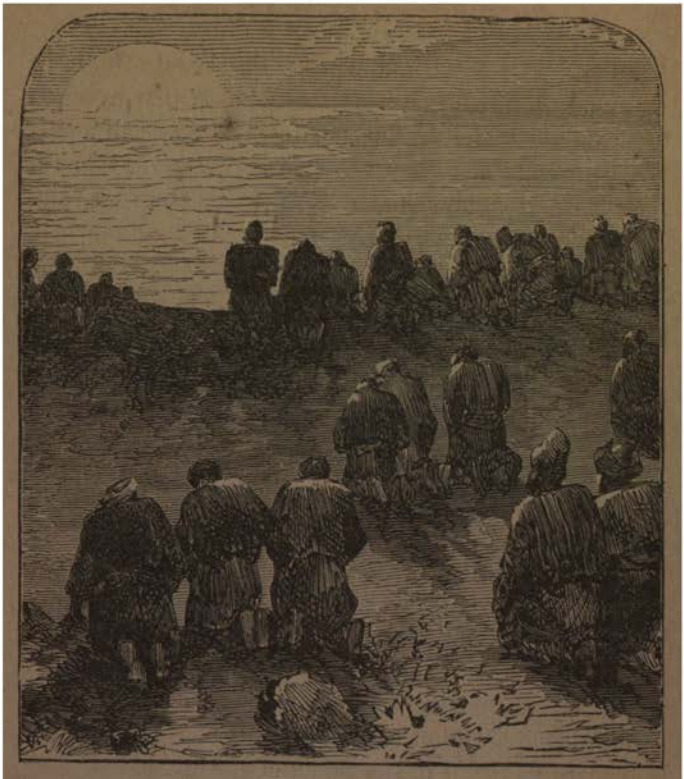
Christian missionaries recognising this evil have had compassion on the sufferers, and now lady doctors, both from Europe and America, are being introduced into native homes, where they are gladly welcomed.

I know no nobler work than this. And while the body is being healed the soul also may be reached by a word in season. Female Medical Missions are only in their infancy, but they give promise of great usefulness in the near future.

A National Association for supplying female medical aid to the women of India, on unsectarian lines, has also been started of late years under the highest patronage. To this enterprise also I wish all success. Let every method be tried that suggests itself, only let something be done on a wide scale as soon as possible; for hundreds of thousands of women and girls are in great need of better medical treatment than they at present receive.

"Altogether the condition of women in India is not a particularly enviable one," says Mr. Shoshee Chunder Dutt in one of his books. I am sure we all agree with this native writer. And there is no hope for permanent improvement, it seems to me, except through the spread of Christianity in the East.

May God richly bless the work of our lady missionaries and their assistants in the schools and homes of India, and let them see of the travail of their souls that they may be satisfied!



PARSEE SUN WORSHIP.

IV.

FIRE WORSHIPPERS.

THE Fire Worshippers of India are the Parsees, the story of whose entry into India is quite a romance. They are not natives of the country, but the descendants of the ancient Persians. The term Parsee is just the Hindustani word for

Persian. The total number of Parsees in India is extremely limited, being not more than one hundred thousand; but their influence, especially in commerce, is very great, and they are known far and wide for their natural genius in trade, their intelligence, and their munificent charities.

Bombay is the great centre of this community, though members of it are to be found residing at Ahmedabad, Poona, Surah, Calcutta, and other places. Mrs. E. F. Chapman, referring to the Parsees, says: "Their position in India may in many respects be said to be analogous to that of the Jews in Western Europe. Like the Jews, they have lived for centuries as exiles and aliens in a foreign land, keeping themselves distinct from the people among whom they dwelt in their religion, their dress, and their social customs, and seldom intermarrying with them. Like the Jews they have distinguished themselves by their aptitude for business, their enterprise, and their commercial prosperity, as well as by their loyalty to the Government, although, like the Jews, the Parsees are seldom, if ever, to be found in the ranks of the army."

To account for the presence of Parsees or Persians in India we must go back to the seventh century, when the Mohammedans from Arabia overran and conquered Persia, in the reign of the Caliph Omar. Yezdigird was the last monarch of the ancient Persian dynasty; and at his overthrow and death the people of the country, who in religion were Zoroastrians, or, popularly, fire worshippers, were commanded to give up their own religion and adopt that of the Mohammedans.

The bulk of the people of Persia, afraid of the swords of the Moslems, agreed to the change of religion; but others, having the courage of their convictions, refused thus to demean themselves, and preferred death or banishment. Many were slain, but a few escaped and retired to desert places and bleak mountains in Korasan, where, for a while, some say for many years, they were left in peace.

Eventually, however, the power of the Moslem arms extended to Korasan, and the hunted Persians fled to the island of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, where again they were unmolested for a season. After fifteen years, however, the Moslems were once more upon the track of the fugitives, and this time with the determination to exterminate them. The enemy were balked of their prey, however, for on arrival at Hormuz they found the forlorn band of persecuted fire worshippers had flown, and were beyond the reach of pursuit.

Like the Pilgrim Fathers of later days, the Persians had taken to the sea, resolved to cross the ocean and found a new home for themselves in a far country. Sailing eastward they stayed for a time on an island called Dir, but soon they moved on and on, and after narrowly escaping shipwreck they landed at a spot called Sanjan on the coast of Guzerat in India. Thus did the faithful few amongst the Persians forsake country, friends, and worldly possessions, in preference to giving up their faith in the religion of their forefathers! What exactly that religion was we shall see in a moment.

Having landed at Sanjan the exiles, a mere handful

of people, sent a deputation to wait upon Jàdo Rana, the Hindu prince of the country, to ask for permission to settle in the land. This prince seemed disposed to be friendly, but he requested, ere replying to the entreaty, to be made acquainted with the religious creed of the strangers. The answer the Persians, or as we may now call them the Parsees, made was as follows :—

"Hear, O illustrious prince, what we relate of our faith. Be not afraid of us. No evil will befall thee from our arrival here. We will be friends to all in Hindustan. Know for certainty that we worship the god Yezdân. On account of our faith have we fled from the unbelievers. We have abandoned all our possessions. We have encountered difficulties in a long journey. House and land and possessions we have at once abandoned. We are the poor descendants of Jamshid. We reverence the moon and the sun. Three other things we hold in estimation—viz., the cow, water, and fire. We worship fire and water, also the cow, the sun, and moon. Whatever God has created in the world we pray to."

The Prince of Sanjan was satisfied with the account the Parsees gave of themselves, and expressed his willingness to let them stay in his dominions, and to afford them protection, on certain conditions. The conditions were four in number. First, the refugees must give up their own language, and for the future speak Guzerati, the language of the land of their adoption. Secondly, their women must exchange their own peculiar dress for the garment of the country. Thirdly, the men must forego the use of military arms and armour, and become peaceful citizens. And

fourthly, the marriage ceremony among them must be celebrated at night and not by daylight.

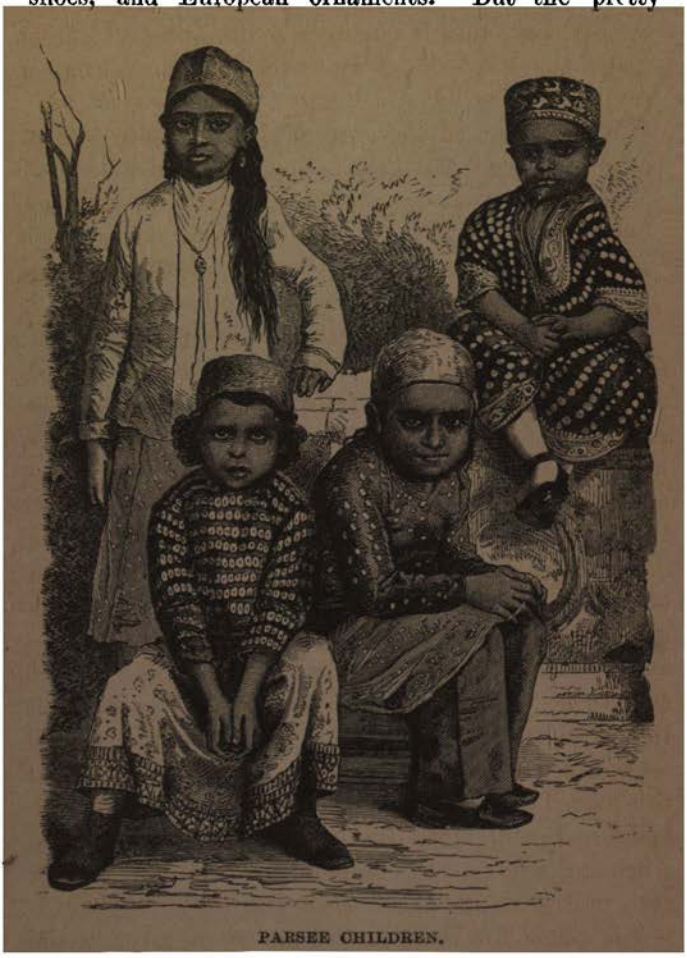
The Parsees after a little consideration agreed to these terms, and they were then, in the year 717, allowed to settle in the country ; and in India they have remained ever since, and, as I have already said, they have grown into a prosperous if not a very large community.

It may be asked, did the Parsees keep their part of the agreement ? Practically they did, though not to such an extent in some particulars as to lose their individuality or nationality amongst their new friends the Hindus. With respect to the language, the Parsees only retain their old Persian dialect in the exercises of religion. For general conversation in public, and even amongst themselves in private, they invariably speak Guzerati, and seem to have as much affection for it as the natives themselves.

With respect to dress, a Parsee lady wears a *sari* like her Hindu sisters, only the upper part of the garment, instead of passing from the right waist diagonally over the chest to the left shoulder, is carried up the left side over the head and brought from the right shoulder to be tucked under the left waist. Moreover, a Parsee lady has a relic of ancient Persia round her head in the form of a white handkerchief, and this distinguishes her from a Hindu lady.

Sir Edwin Arnold, referring to this peculiar custom, says : "It is incumbent on Parsee ladies to wear a rather ugly white band drawn tightly over the crown and brows ; and this remnant of the early times has resisted even the new taste for silk stockings, satin

shoes, and European ornaments. But the pretty



PARSEE CHILDREN.

Zoroastrians, who possess the finest and glossiest black tresses in the world, object to their concealment,

and so the white headband is pushed farther and farther back, until it threatens to disappear altogether under the silk *sari* of violet or rose, sea-green, or sapphire, drawn so coquettishly over the head."

With respect to the agreement not to wear armour or to bear arms the Parsees have kept to it more or less strictly all along. In times of extreme peril, now and again, they have fought in their own defence; but at the present day they are an eminently peaceable people, and never follow the trade of war.

It is said that when the Parsees first gave up their armour, they symbolised it by a thin muslin shirt which they wear next the skin and which is called a *sadaro*. As this garment is worn by men and women alike, however, the foregoing explanation of its origin can scarcely be correct. No one, not even the Parsees themselves, seem to know why it is worn.

The Parsees, like the Hindus, have the investiture of the sacred thread. The thread of the Parsees is more like a cord, as it consists of seventy-two threads, and instead of being worn over the shoulders it is used as a girdle round the waist. The knot by which it is tied is undone daily, and a prayer is repeated over it when it is re-tied. Ladies as well as gentlemen wear this sacred thread, which is supposed to preserve both body and soul from the power of the evil spirit, Ahriman, who is represented in the Parsee faith as antagonistic to the good spirit Ormuzd.

The name fire worshippers has been given to the Parsees on account of their extreme veneration for the sun and for fire. There are some who say that this strange people actually worship fire, and perhaps some

of the ignorant and more superstitious amongst them do; but the majority do not, but simply venerate fire as the representation of Him who is the Eternal Light.

"God, according to the Parsees, is the embodiment of glory, effulgence, and light; and a Parsee engaged in prayer is directed to stand before fire, or with face to the sun, as proper symbols of the Almighty. Fire is the best and noblest representative of the Divinity in its brightness, activity, purity, and incorruptibility; while the sun is the best and most useful of God's creation." The Parsees, in short, would say with the Psalmist, "The Lord God is a sun and a shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

Though the Parsees cannot be said as a body actually to worship fire, yet they appear to do so, and hence are called fire worshippers. They have what are called fire temples in which to perform their religious ceremonies. These are small, unpretentious buildings, and each temple contains an altar on which is found a portion of the "holy fire," which is said to have come down from heaven originally, and which is designed to be a perpetual reminder to the faithful of the Eternal Light, even God Himself.

The fire, which is called Bahram, is never allowed to die out in Parsee temples, but is fed day and night by the priests, who are in constant attendance. The worshippers gather round it reverently at the time of service, though they take care not to approach

very near it. Even the priests approach it only with a half mask over the face, lest their breath should defile it, and never touch it with their hands, but with sacred utensils.

Offerings are made to the fire as the representative of God—offerings of flesh, milk, butter, and homa twigs, and as these things are offered in sacrifice by the priests, the people signify their approval with bowed heads. Prayer and the reading of a lesson from the Parsee scriptures follow. Then the priests chant the praises of Ormuzd, pour out a libation of homa juice to the sacred fire, perform other religious ceremonies, and finally conclude with prayer, especially for kings and all in places of authority and power, that righteousness may be done throughout the earth, and that peace may everywhere prevail. Thus the service in a fire temple seems to be a strange mixture of truth and superstition, of sense and of nonsense. No stranger is allowed to enter at any time within the doors of a Parsee temple. It would be unpardonable profanity so to do.

The Parsees are considered a very upright if a rather peculiar people. They have the very highest character for honesty, industry, peacefulness, intelligence, and benevolence. Truthfulness is a heritage of the race. The very children amongst the Parsees are taught that to tell a lie is a most shameful thing, grieving to God, and disastrous to man. It is believed that "he that speaketh lies shall perish little by little." The Evil Spirit Ahriman is called "the liar of liars," and young people are exhorted to beware of becoming like him.

The Parsees are an enlightened people, and have

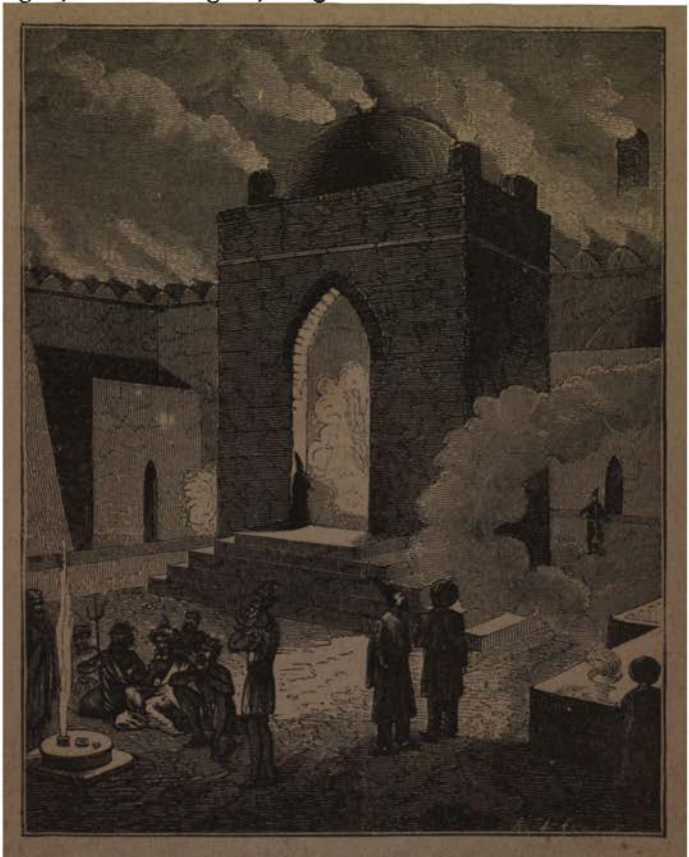
been foremost amongst the races of India in taking advantage of European education for the benefit of their children, both boys and girls. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his "India Revisited," says: "When in Bombay we visited a large school for Parsee girls, where some one hundred and fifty of the Zoroastrian maidens of all sizes and ages were learning wisdom of the modern sort, the little ones with black tresses flowing from beneath embroidered caps, the older girls in the *sari*, the pretty, bright *choli*, and the skirt. They sang for me, and proudly exhibited their achievements in sewing, knitting, and crochet-work."

The same writer in the same book gives an interesting account of a musical afternoon at which he was present, given in a large house on Malabar Hill by a Parsee gentleman, Mr. Kábraji. Let me quote the passage as throwing light on the home life of the modern Parsees. It runs:—

"Here there were assembled in a really magnificent pillared hall, paved with white and blue marble, some eighty or a hundred of the leading members of Parsee, Hindu, and Mohammedan society, including at least forty native ladies. Sir Frederick Roberts, Mr. Ilbert, Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Justice Birdwood, and a number of English residents, mingled with the large native party on perfectly easy and equal grounds, but no London drawing-room could have presented a scene so bright in colour and character.

"The Parsee and Hindu ladies—many of them personally most charming in appearance, and all gentle and graceful in demeanour—wore lovely dresses of every conceivable hue, rose-colour, amber, purple,

silver, gold, azure, white, green, crimson. A Guzerati girl, in red and gold, sang the 'Last Rose of Summer'



FIRE TEMPLE OF PARSEES, BAKU.

with notable skill to the piano played by her sister; and then a ring of Parsee maidens, in flowing silk robes, and dark glossy tresses, chanted a 'song-circle,'

softly singing in chorus, and beating time with their hands, while they moved round and round in a rhythmical ring of singular grace.

"The music ended with 'God save the Queen,' quite accurately sung by a number of these Indian maidens in native words; and after refreshments had been handed round, chaplets of flowers and little balls of rosebuds and the fragrant champa buds were distributed, and the well-pleased company separated by the light of innumerable oil lamps set among the shrubs and trees of the compound.

"Assuredly such a gathering is a great and signal token of the increasing friendship arising between the various races of India; nor could anything be calculated more to impress and gratify a fresh observer coming back, after many years, to modern Bombay." Truly, in the East as elsewhere, "the old order changeth, giving place to new," and the Parsees are an important factor in bringing about the change.

Commenting on the changes wrought of late years in the Parsee community, Dr. Mitra, in a lecture given in Calcutta, said: "At the beginning of this century the Parsee at home differed very little from his Hindu fellow-subjects. The furniture of his house was the same, and he enjoyed life squatting on cushions and carpets like the Hindus. His victuals consisted of rice, home-made unleavened bread, kid, mutton, and vegetables dressed exactly in the same way as Hindu dishes are. He ate from plates of silver or bronze or brass, according to circumstances, as did the Hindus; and his lady sat apart and took her meals separately from the male members of the family.

"Amongst the higher and middle classes of the people of Bombay these customs have been entirely given up. In no respectable Parsee house are the old *farsh* and *takia* to be met with; chairs and couches have entirely set them aside. Metal plates have made room for glass and china; the meal is now served on English tables, and tea, leavened bread, and pastry figure thereon.

"At ordinary meals the rice and curry still hold their ground, and on ceremonial occasions English dishes are generally eschewed. The restriction about the lady of a family dining with her male relations has also been to a great extent set aside. Mrs. Bomanji sits at the head of the table, and distributes tea just in the same way as does Mrs. Jones, Brown, or Robinson. Her presence, too, serves in a great measure to improve the decorum and tone of conversation at table." It has to be said, however, that as a rule Parsees will not invite individuals of another religion or nationality to dine with them, having not yet seen their way to break through all caste distinctions.

Parsees are fond of active exercise, and in this they differ from Hindus and Mohammedans, who love to take life easily even in their play. A Parsee boy may not always be the *dux* of his class at school, but he is always leader in the playground. Parsees play both cricket and football with considerable energy and skill; and all manly games are their delight. Consequently in physique this race is the superior of other Indian races.

Notwithstanding their general intelligence and

good sense, the Parsees display surprising superstition in one direction. They have absolute faith in the exploded science of astrology. "They will do nothing without consulting the stars, their conjunctions and their oppositions. They rarely start on a journey without being satisfied that no adverse star stands in the way, and no marriage can be solemnised among them without a careful scrutiny of the relative position and disposition of the heavenly bodies." They believe also in lucky and unlucky days, and kindred superstitions, just like the rest of Easterns.

The religious book of the Parsees is called the Zend-Avesta. It is a poor production, chiefly taken up with remarks about uncleanness and the evils which result therefrom. The Parsees say that at one time their forefathers had a very voluminous sacred book, which gave instructions to men concerning good actions, which explained religious duties, and the way to obtain paradise, which gave a full account of the Spirit of Good and the Spirit of Evil, and of the angels in heaven, and countless other matters.

However, that old book has been lost; and of the present book, the Zend-Avesta, the Rev. John Milne, M.A., in his St. Giles' lecture on the subject, says: "When it was discovered to the learned of Europe in the middle of the last century, its uncommon stupidity led half of its critics to pronounce it a forgery. Its oldest morsels are the most spiritual; the newer parts view religion through the eyes of priests, scribes, and pharisees. No great religion has left so poor a record."

In writing of the Parsees one remarkable custom

of theirs cannot be overlooked, as it differs so much from anything that exists amongst any other race. The custom I refer to is the manner in which the dead amongst them are disposed of. It might be thought that fire worshippers would burn their dead like the Hindus, but no! fire is considered too sacred a thing to be profaned by a dead body. The earth also must not be contaminated by a body from which the soul has departed.

As, then, the Parsees, owing to their religious scruples, can neither burn nor bury their dead, they have recourse to "exposing" them on what are called Towers of Silence. I visited some of these towers when in Bombay, and witnessed the funeral of a little girl. Visitors are only allowed within a certain distance of the towers, but I was near enough to see all that passed.

The finest tower at Bombay is over ninety feet in height, and has a circular inside platform of three hundred feet, with a central well about a hundred and fifty feet in circumference. The circular platform at the top of the tower is entirely paved with large stone slabs, well cemented, and divided into three rows for the reception of the dead bodies of males, females, and children respectively. The bodies are taken in by priests dedicated for life to the Towers of Silence.

At the funeral I witnessed there were very few mourners; but the few there were walked behind the bier in pairs, each couple joined hand in hand by holding a white handkerchief between them, in token of sympathetic grief. The bier was made of iron, and was carried by the priests. As the procession drew

close to the tower it stopped, and the mourners then turned back, while the priests carried the body of the departed child within the gloomy edifice, up the staircase to the top of the building, where they "exposed" it in the children's portion.

It was an extraordinary sight, and a sad one for mourners and spectators. Vultures and other birds of prey were hovering round, and when the priests withdrew they alighted upon the exposed body, and within an hour or so, I was told, nothing would be left but bones, which, when perfectly dried up by atmospheric influences and the powerful heat of the tropical sun, would be thrown down the central well, where they would gradually crumble to dust. Thus do the Parsees dispose of their dead.

What a romantic history the Parsees have! How extraordinary some of their customs are! It is surprising to think of their preserving their individuality through all the centuries since they landed on the shores of India; and to all appearance they seem destined to remain "a peculiar people" for generations to come.

It is very seldom indeed that a Parsee becomes a Christian. Yet there are one or two notable instances. The Rev. Sorabji Kharsadji, now a member of the Church Missionary Society at Poona, was brought up in a strict Parsee home. However, while pursuing his studies, he was led to read the Bible, and the old, old story of Jesus and His love laid hold upon his affections.

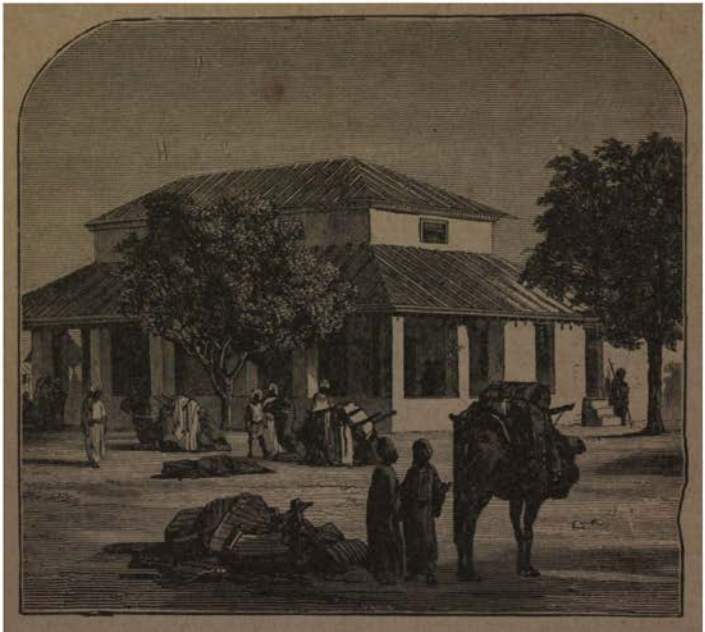
Terrible was the wrath of the young man's friends when he declared himself to be a Christian. He was

TOWER OF SILENCE, MALABAR HILL, BOMBAY.

imprisoned and cruelly treated, but all in vain; for nothing could shake his faith in Christ or his determination to join himself openly to a Christian community. As a last resort his relations placed him in an oarless and rudderless boat of the flimsiest description, and left him out on the open sea, hoping he would be drowned. He reached land, however, and obtained the protection of the Government until he joined the Church Missionary Society, when his father disinherited him, and his mother died of a broken heart.

The young convert was beside himself with grief at the sad turn of events; but with a still greater and nobler man he could only say, "Here I stand: I can do no other." He felt that, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." In due time the young man was ordained to the Christian ministry, and to-day the Rev. Sorabji Kharsadji is a pillar of strength to the native Christian Church of India.

Thus from all religions Christ our Lord is gradually winning true and devoted followers. We must work and pray for the speedy fulfilment of the prophetic saying, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."



TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOW.

V.

HOUSEHOLD AND OTHER PESTS.

IN all countries there are certain household pests which are more or less of a trouble and grief to housewives, and an amusement, if not a terror, to children and young people; but perhaps India carries off the palm for the number of such pests, and for the discomforts they cause.

In attempting to describe these minor drawbacks

of life in India, it is difficult to know where to begin ; but it may not be amiss to mention that the common *flea* is as prominent as any other enemy of mankind, and worthy of a forward place. This little torment seems to be ubiquitous, for wherever in the world you go, you are sure to make his acquaintance, or, perhaps more correctly, he is sure to make yours. And where you would find one in England you will meet with fifty in India.

I remember on one occasion seeing my wife's white dress, when we were travelling, quite black with a little army of fleas, that sprang up suddenly and unexpectedly from the floor of a room which we had just entered. The contingent that attacked me I did not see, but I felt them. Has any boy or girl reading this book ever slept or attempted to sleep in a house fairly swarming with fleas ? It is a daring enterprise, and requires courage and patience—especially patience. As some poet has said :—

"No sleep till morn, when flesh and hunger meet."

In large cities in India and in European houses it is possible, except in times of epidemics of fleas, when they come by millions, to keep this plague fairly well in hand by the liberal use of kerosene oil and carbolic acid ; but in country places, and when you are travelling, you must just bear the infliction as philosophically as possible. It might be worse.

Closely allied to the flea in popular fancy is the *bug*, and India has produced a few splendid varieties of this unclean creature. I suppose my young readers have heard of the old lady who was desirous of going

with her family to a seaside resort in England, and who, in looking down the advertisement columns of her daily paper, came across a likely notice which concluded thus: "N.B.—Terms moderate." "My dear," said the old lady to her eldest daughter who was standing by, "here is just the thing for us, 'N.B.' —no bugs—and 'terms moderate.'"

"N.B." rendered in the same way could not be said of a *Dâk bungalow* or travellers' rest I once entered at Gya in Northern India. My presence in the district arose from a desire to visit the celebrated Buddhist temple not far away. A kind and paternal Government has provided travellers with a bungalow in which to abide for a day or two, as there are no hotels within fifty miles.

A travellers' rest in India is a very primitive dwelling-house of one or two small rooms, with a bedstead in a corner, a table in the centre of the floor, a chair or two, and a man in charge to cook for you and wait upon you. When I entered the bungalow at Gya, my first duty was to inspect the bedstead, with the result that I discovered an interesting colony of very fine bugs arranged in a solid mass, five or six layers deep, all round the woodwork. I did not take the trouble to count the colony, but at a rough guess I should say there would be not less than five thousand of the dark creatures. I stayed there three nights, and slept, on the whole, very peacefully; but it was on the table, and not on the bed.

India has a speciality in bugs which is called the "flying-bug," and one passing through a room is enough to take away the appetite of a party of hungry

people, owing to the unpleasant odour that is left behind. Bishop Heber, in his travels up the Ganges by boat, was greatly troubled by these pests. Writing in his Diary on June 19th, 1824, he says : "One of the greatest plagues we have as yet met with in this journey is that of the winged bugs. In shape, size, and scent, with the additional faculty of flying, they resemble the 'grabbatic' genus, too well known in England. The night of our lying off Barrackpore they were very troublesome ; but when we were off the Raja's palace they came out in hundreds and thousands from every bush and every heap of ruins, and so filled our cabins as to make them barely endurable." The wonder is that the good Bishop was able to endure the affliction at all.

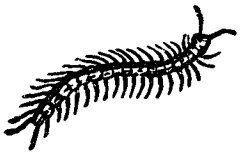
Happily bugs will not stay in clean houses or with clean people, so the remedy is simple in European homes in India.

Cockroaches, however, which are almost as plentiful as bugs, are no respecters of persons, and are found in European and native houses alike. These cockroaches, which are nearly two inches in length, love darkness rather than light, and not altogether because their deeds are evil, for I believe they are fairly useful in clearing away odds and ends that even the best of servants will sometimes leave in unwatched corners. Personally, I have no dislike to cockroaches as long as they are content to work in the dark ; but now and again the lamp-light attracts them, and, using their wings, they fly up into the drawing-room, and give one the horrors by alighting on the nape of one's neck.

Ladies, for some unexplained reason, stand greatly

in dread of cockroaches, almost as much so as of mice. I have known children, however, play with them, and turn them over on their backs, with great glee. I have heard that cockroaches sometimes take the place of raisins in puddings, but I cannot remember eating any.

A more serious pest is the *centipede*, which fortunately is very rarely seen in houses, though now and again I have killed one both in bathroom and bedroom. The common species is two or three inches in length ; but sometimes a variety is found about seven inches in length and half an inch thick. A nasty-looking creature is a centipede, with its hundred little legs as sharp as needles.



CENTIPEDE.

I know a lady who trod on a centipede one morning with her bare foot, and in a second the vicious creature had nearly buried itself in her flesh, and a heated iron had to be applied before it could be induced to relax its hold. The place was very much inflamed, and had to be poulticed, and it was weeks before the foot could be freely used again for walking. It is well never to walk about the house with bare feet in India, though of course the servants do, and they seldom come to any harm through the practice.

Musquitoes are a perpetual pest in India, and nowhere are they worse than in the city of Calcutta, especially in the rainy season, when the country around is a perfect swamp, and malaria is in the air. A musquito is a very small, insignificant-looking insect,

but it makes its presence felt both by night and day. Its bites are sharp and painful, and make the skin very irritable, so that it is almost impossible to keep from scratching; and yet it is extremely foolish to do so, for scratching usually makes matters worse. If a bite is bravely borne, and judiciously let alone, probably the pain will soon pass away; but scratching increases the irritation, and what was merely a speck becomes a big sore.

Musquitoes trouble young people as much or more than adults. I remember when visiting the General Hospital one Thursday to have a chat with the patients, I came to a bed on which a sailor-boy lay in pain. His face was pitted as if with small-pox, and I asked him if he was recovering from that disease. "No, sir," he said, "the marks are only musquito bites." It was a revelation to me that the little pests could do such mischief. Sailors in the harbour at Calcutta suffer much from musquitoes which swarm on the river. The poor lad had been driven into a feverish state by the constant torment, and was in the hospital to recruit. From that day I understood how it was that the musquito had earned for itself the name of "that villain musquito!"

Europeans in India very often have fine gauze curtains to cover their beds at night to protect them from the common enemy. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his "India Revisited," commenting on this custom, humorously says: "Woe to the careless or too sleepy traveller who has enclosed a musquito within his protecting curtains before seeking repose! The crafty enemy waits patiently until its victim sinks into the

first slumber, then it searches keenly for the unguarded portions which may present themselves, and silently stings and sucks.

"Every minute the hum of its insulting little trumpet is heard, preluding a new approach, and seems to sound like a fiendish mock as the sufferer beats his face and arms in vain endeavours to slay the minute assailant. A violent blow upon one's own nose is merely followed by a new *reveillée* from the musquito's horn, and it is useless to lie still and let the foe have his wicked will. You wake from brief and feverish slumbers to find yourself spotted all over; while the assassin, gorged and somnolent, is seen taking his ill-earned rest upon the curtains; and when, yielding to a spirit of uncontrollable revenge, you immolate him by a crafty stroke, that tiny speck of blood which he exudes in dying has cost you more philosophic calm than twenty-four hours of peace can restore."

There are a few negroes in Calcutta, chiefly connected with the shipping of the port. A story is told of one of them, a mere boy, a captain's servant, which is characteristic of the smartness of the race. The captain, who unfortunately often indulged too freely in strong drink, had a remarkably fiery nose, and one day his servant noticed while his master was lying back in his chair asleep that a musquito hovered about his face, and at last deliberately alighted on his nose, from which, however, it immediately flew away again as if in astonishment and fear. "Ah!" exclaimed the young negro, highly delighted, "me glad to see you burn your foot!"

Many preventives have been suggested in connection with the musquito pest, and amongst the rest wormwood leaves, which it is asserted, if rubbed over the face and hands, will keep the troublesome insects away. Perhaps so!

A more certain remedy, however, would be the wide cultivation in India of a plant called *Drosera dichotama*, or the musquito-catcher. This plant grows about one foot high, and has narrow, sharp leaves, which are densely covered with fine hairs, each of which is coated with a bright gummy substance. Musquitoes seem to be fascinated by this plant, and if one is placed in a room they will gather round it, and eventually alight on it in swarms.

It is most interesting to watch the method by which this curious plant secures its prey. It is a genuine case of "the biter bitten." "Immediately the musquito alights on the leaf, it may be that only one out of its six legs will stick to the sweet substance at the extremity of the hairs, but in struggling to free itself the insect invariably touches with its legs or wings the contiguous hairs, and is immediately fixed. The hairs meanwhile are not idle; being sensitive they slowly but surely curl round and draw their victim into the very centre of the leaf, thus bringing it into contact with the very short hairs, which are placed there in order to facilitate the process of sucking the life-blood from the body." Unfortunately this musquito-catching plant is difficult to cultivate, as it thrives but indifferently; otherwise what a boon and blessing it would be to the human race!

Another household pest is the *lizard*, which may

be seen on the walls and ceilings of every house in India. I scarcely think the lizard should be regarded as a pest, for he is a very useful little creature, and gentle and harmless. Yet most ladies and young people feel afraid of lizards, and try to clear them out of the house; chiefly, I suppose, because you can never be sure that one of the cold, clammy little things will not fall from the ceiling on to your face, or down the back of your neck.

Lizards are useful in one respect, because they

LIZARD.

delight in flies and musquitoes for food, and spend their whole time in catching and eating them. It is a remarkable sight to watch a lizard stalking a musquito, on the wall or the ceiling. The insect may be five or six yards away, but the lizard can see it; and slowly, very slowly and cautiously, draws nearer and nearer to it, until at last, when within a foot or so of its prey, it will dart forward like lightning, and the musquito disappears down the capacious throat of the lizard, and is no more seen or felt by human beings.

On my study table in Calcutta a lizard was constantly to be seen, as tame as could be, and I let it have a drawer for a home. I have heard of a gentleman who became quite attached to two lizards, and

invariably carried them about with him in his coat pockets, and would produce them sometimes in juvenile society, much to the delight of some and the terror of others—the latter chiefly being girls.

Mohammedans, strange to say, hate lizards, from a silly belief that they hang their heads in mimicry of the attitude of reverent Moslems at prayer. A Mohammedan calls lizards "evil things," and will kill them without the slightest compunction, though of other pests, as a rule, he will take no special notice. I must confess to having a partiality for lizards, and I could never bear to see them needlessly disturbed.

Spiders, however, I detested. I do not mind a little English spider that can be swept down and turned out of doors without any trouble; but a gigantic Indian spider, sprawling over the table or running along the floor or the ceiling, is enough to make one's flesh creep. The worst spiders are called *Balork Mukra*, and are black and hairy. Another kind not quite as large is red and white, and hairy. These creatures when driven into a corner will, if they have a chance, turn and bite, and a nasty mark they can make, too, which if not attended to at once will cause a painful swelling which will last for two or three days. Beware of spiders!

Bishop Heber seems to have made the acquaintance of all Indian pests, and of course he includes the spider in his list. I notice an entry in his Diary on September 18th, 1824, as follows: "Within these few days all the vermin part of Noah's household seems to have taken a fancy to my little ark. To the scorpions, the cockroaches, the ants, and the snake, were added this morning two of the largest spiders I ever saw,

and such as I regretted afterwards I did not preserve in spirits. In a bottle they would have made monsters fit for the shelf of any conjurer in Christendom."

The Bishop mentions *scorpions*, and truly these creatures well deserve the name of pests. There are not many of them in the cities of the plains in India, but in the Northern Provinces they abound. I have a scorpion, which I caught and bottled, and have on exhibition in my museum, and I never look at it without thinking what a dangerous customer it was when alive.

SCORPION, NATURAL SIZE.

A scorpion is not unlike a lobster on a small scale. The claws are not the worst part of it, however—the sting is in the tail, which is usually carried curled over the back. Scorpions feed on beetles, and other insects; and after seizing them, pierce them with the sting before eating them. They also eat the eggs of spiders. They lurk under stones, and in holes and crevices, but come forth to seek their prey, running with great activity. When alarmed or irritated they show great fierceness, evidently aware of the power of their sting, which they move about in all directions as if threatening an adversary.

Scorpions are universally disliked, and not a little

dreaded, being apt to get into houses and in shoes and boots and hats, so that accidents are very frequent in places where they abound. The sting of a scorpion is seldom fatal, but is very painful, and is attended with much sickness and constitutional derangement, nor do the effects soon cease. The best remedy is ammonia internally administered, and also applied externally.

Miss C. F. Gordon Cumming, in her book entitled "In the Himalayas and on the Indian Plains," tells a strange story of the cure of a woman who had been bitten by a scorpion. The tale runs thus: "One day when we were sitting under a great tree a poor woman came past, half carried by her son. She was writhing in agony, having been bitten in the foot by a scorpion. When my moonshee, or teacher, heard what was the matter, he at once knelt down on the ground, muttering prayers, and then taking up a handful of dust he therewith rubbed the wound. The woman, who had sunk down, almost in a convulsion, slowly came to herself, and in a few minutes arose, blessed him, and walked away, scarcely needing any support. We asked him what he had really done to her, and he declared that he had only prayed for her and then touched her foot." It must have been a prayer of faith, for it cured the wound.

The industrious little creature the *red ant* is very often a pest in India. It is impossible to keep these ants out of the house, and they are usually to be found just where you do not want them—in the store-room, having a fine time amongst the provisions. They seem to be specially fond of sweet things.

I remember when drinking my first cup of tea in India—it was in Madras—noticing some little things floating on the top. I asked my host what they were, and he said, "Oh, nothing, only ants; they will be after the sugar." I began to lift them out of the cup with my spoon, but was laughed at for my pains, and assured that before I had been long in India I would not hesitate to swallow any number of ants. The prediction was not fulfilled, however, for I never got over my objection to the mixture. Ants are well enough out of doors attending to their multitudinous duties, but they are decidedly in the way in a cup of tea. I cannot say that I like them any better in jam either, and they are very fond of jam.

What thieves the red and black ants are! Householders have to watch their possessions very carefully, or the ants will make serious depredations, especially in the granary; and the cunning of the little creatures is marvellous. The Rev. J. Ewen of Benares, in his book on India, says:—

"On one occasion I had a small basketful of bajra, a small coarse grain, on which poultry is fed, in a room covered with matting made of strips of bamboo interlaced. It was gradually disappearing, and I could not discover how it went. One night I entered the room without a light, to fetch a book I knew where to find. I was startled by the noise in what was an unoccupied room; it was like the far, faint march of an army. I hurried out to get a light, and on returning found the floor black with ants, each busy carrying off a grain. I stopped to watch their mode of operations, and it was certainly cleverly

planned. There were two parties. One was engaged inside the basket. Their duty was to bring the grain to the top, and from there to drop it to the carriers on the floor. These picked it up and hurried it off to their nest. In this way they could empty the basket in a very few days."

Red ants are held in great reverence by the Hindus, who may constantly be observed searching for ants' nests, near which they will place a small quantity of sugar, or some coarsely ground flour. The idea is, wherever red ants colonise, prosperity is sure to follow in the homes of human beings. All the same, ants, both red and black, are a pest in the household.

And *white ants*, which are about the size of a grain of rice, are a thousand times worse, for they can do as much mischief in an hour as would take a man a week to redeem. These depredators do not attack provisions, but have a taste for millinery and ladies' finery in general. They do not object either to a suit of clothes. They are partial also to furniture, and the beams of houses. Books, too, seem to agree with their digestive organs. Only give them a fair field in a house, and they can do wonders in the destructive line in a very short time.

White ants work in the dark. They cannot bear the light, and if they have to cross an open space they form for themselves along the wall or ceiling tunnels of hard mortar in which they hide. Fortunately thus they betray their presence. However, much mischief is usually done before they are discovered. It is surprising how they will eat a great beam to dust in the inside, which outwardly appears sound.

In the church of which I was pastor in Calcutta, we had all the beams tapped at regular intervals of time; and every four years we incurred a very heavy expense in renewing beams which the ants had eaten. On one sad occasion a beam that had been overlooked cracked during service, and a little girl was so much injured by the falling *débris* that she had to be carried to the infirmary; but she ultimately recovered, and was no worse for the accident. My pulpit, also, was more than once attacked, and had to be partially replaced. In private houses, in shops, and in public buildings the depredations of these little pests are indeed very serious in India.

There are many other pests that might be referred to at considerable length, but I shall simply mention some of them in bringing this chapter to a close.

Frogs often hop into the house from the road or the garden, and their plaintive cry at night-time is distressing, and their croaking is at all times objectionable. *Bats* at dusk make free to fly through the house. Quite a number every evening came to eat nuts over my bed while hanging on to the ceiling. The nuts they got from trees in the garden. Every morning the shells had to be removed from the top of the musquito curtain, which was the only protection between the bats and the bed. The little insects called *silver fishes* abound in all houses, and make sad havoc of clothing.

At certain seasons of the year *green flies* would come into the house by tens of thousands, and try hard to get into the soup-tureen, and to interfere generally with the comfort of the evening meal. In the morning

there were heaps of dead flies on the floor which had to be shovelled out.

Crows, too, and *flying-foxes* were very anxious to make my acquaintance, and did not scruple to enter the house. Oh, those comical but wicked crows! If anything bright was left lying about on a table, a smart crow would be sure to notice it, and hop in and pick it up, and be off again, before you could expostulate even in the mildest of tones. Crows are fond of eggs, and when the egg-man came these thieves would be sure to be about, and sometimes would succeed in making away with two or three treasures. It was a sight, to be sure, to see a crow with its head on one side drawing nearer and nearer to a coveted egg, and at last suddenly and fiercely sticking its bill into it. Occasionally the egg would fall just as the thief was sailing out of the window with it, and then what an uproar there was over the lost tit-bit!

But I must stop! Household pests make an attractive and almost endless subject for a returned Anglo-Indian to write about. And let not any reader think that by these pests life is made unbearable in the East. Far from it! Use becomes second nature.

ADAM'S PEAK, CEYLON.

VI.

SACRED FOOTPRINTS.

ONE of the most curious customs of the East is the worship of sacred footprints of gods and goddesses. As I travelled about India I often saw men, women and children drawing near to with reverence, and bowing down in admiration before, footmarks on stone, which they believed to be impressions from the feet of Siva, Vishnu, or Buddha, or some other so-called divinity or revered personage.

The worship of sacred footprints has arisen, I suppose, from other customs of the East connected with the feet of human beings. The feet of kings and holy

people are spoken of in preference to the other parts of the body. His Majesty the ex-king of Burmah was always mentioned as the "golden feet." Then putting the feet upon the necks of fallen kings was a favourite way of triumphing over foes. When people are disputing, even at the present day, in India, should one be a little pressed and the other begin to exult, the former will say in anger, "I will tread upon thy neck, and after that beat thee." A low-caste man insulting one of a higher caste is sure to hear an onlooker say to the offended individual, "Put your foot on his neck."

I call to mind also on more than one occasion in my house in Calcutta, when I have been grieved with the conduct of a servant, and he has seen that I was angry with him, he has come humbly into my presence, and before I could stop him has thrown himself at my feet, and attempted to place one of my feet upon his neck as a sign of absolute submission and to appease my wrath.

The idea between man and man in this humiliating custom is, that one is the inferior of the other—that one is the servant and slave of the other. And the custom has been extended to gods and goddesses. Thus a worshipper will say in his devotions, "Truly the feet of Siva are upon my head!"

Now I do not say that this idea of total subjection when connected with God is a wrong one. It is, I believe, a good thing to recognise the fact that all things are under God's feet—that heaven is His throne, and the earth His footstool. Not that God is trampling upon us as a wrathful king who has

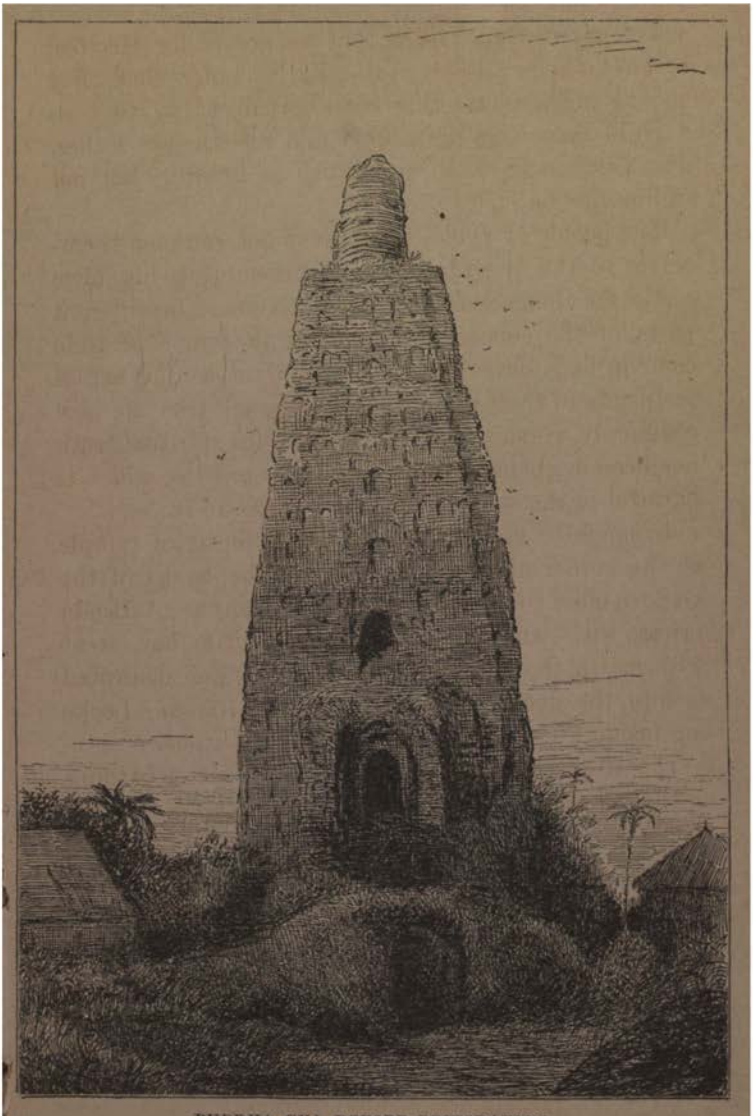
conquered us, but rather that we are under His feet because He is all-powerful. To be under God's feet should mean to us that we are subject to God as a child is subject to a kind and affectionate father. The position is, so to speak, one of humility but not of humiliation.

The people of India, alas! have not confined themselves to the spiritual side of this subject, but have made for themselves footmarks on stone in different parts of the country, which have in course of time come to be believed in by the ignorant as the actual footprints of their divinities, and as such they are now commonly worshipped. Thus a helpful spiritual truth has been degraded into an idolatrous practice which is harmful to the souls of all who indulge in it.

I remember visiting a small sacred footprint temple at the corner of a bathing ghât on the banks of the Ganges close to Scandal Point at Monghyr. A Hindu priest, with whom walked a bright little boy, went with me to show me the temple, which was dedicated to Sita, the good and beautiful wife of Rama. Looking inside I saw a footmark chiselled on stone.

The story goes that the goddess Sita, after bathing in the hot springs at Sita Kund, about six miles away, took one stride to the Ganges, and left her footprint on a stone, then took another stride and landed on a rock in the middle of the Ganges, about a mile away. There there is another footprint. A Rishi, or holy man, dwelt on that rock, and Sita's errand was to see him and talk with him.

The priest in charge of the little temple at Scandal Point, which has been built over the footprint of Sita,



BUDDHA GYA BEFORE RESTORATION.

asserted that once a year, generally in the month of October, sweet music came from the temple; and that the general belief was that Sita, even now, at intervals visits the spot to gratify her faithful worshippers by giving them a foretaste of the music of the blest. I asked if the little boy was musical, and the priest answered, "Yes," with some confusion. My question was not what lawyers call a "leading" one, but it nevertheless set me thinking when I saw the effect it had produced, and I came to the conclusion that the priest and his sharp little lad knew more about how the music was produced than they would care to tell.

However, Hindu worshippers rarely raise any sceptical questions, believing implicitly what the priests tell them. Thousands and tens of thousands of people visit that temple at Monghyr annually, and when the music is heard there is a great cry of "Sita! Sita!" and the worshippers bow themselves down in humble adoration before the sacred footprints of their favourite goddess.

When in Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, I was taken to see some footprints near Manikarnika Kund, the famous well of Hindu mythology. Upon the ghât or bathing place is a large round slab called Charana-paduka, projecting slightly from the pavement; and in the middle of it stands a stone pedestal, the top of which is inlaid with marble. In the centre of the marble are two small flat objects representing the two feet of Vishnu.

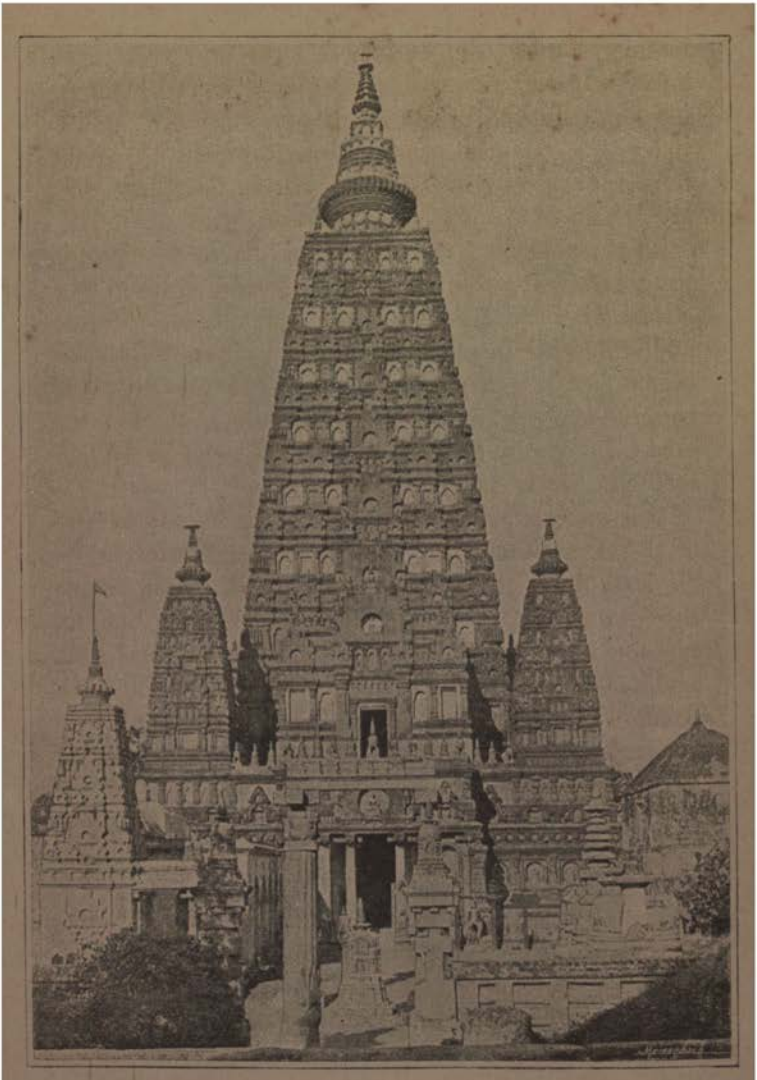
The tradition is that Vishnu selected this precise spot for the performance of ascetic rites, and the worship of his brother god Siva. When he left two

footmarks were seen, and these have ever since been held in great veneration, and have received divine honours. In the month of Kartic (October) multitudes of people flock to the place to worship Vishnu's feet, and by that worship the priests tell them they are certain of an entrance into heaven.

At the moment I was looking on only a few people were gathered round the sacred footprints, but I was struck with the devoutness of their worship. Again and again did they bow themselves down before the sacred feet, and earnestly did they seem to be invoking the blessing or deprecating the anger of Vishnu. And a little mite of a girl was one of the most ardent and enthusiastic of the worshippers.

It is interesting to note that the Buddhists as well as the Hindus have their sacred footprints to worship. In 1885 I visited Buddha Gya, which is famous as the locality of the holy pipul tree under which Buddha sat for six years in mental abstraction, and was tempted of the devil, and overcame the evil one. In front of the great temple at Buddha Gya there is a small open temple of four pillars, covering a large circular stone, and on this stone two feet are carved, which are believed by Buddhists to be the footprints of their Lord. That little temple is called Buddha-pad, or the temple of Buddha's feet.

At a place called Pâtali, also in Northern India, there is, or was, a large stone on which were prints of Buddha's feet, each eighteen inches long and six inches broad. The story in connection with these sacred footmarks is that Buddha, when he reached Pâtali on his way to Kusingara where he was to die,



BUDDHA GYA AS IT IS.

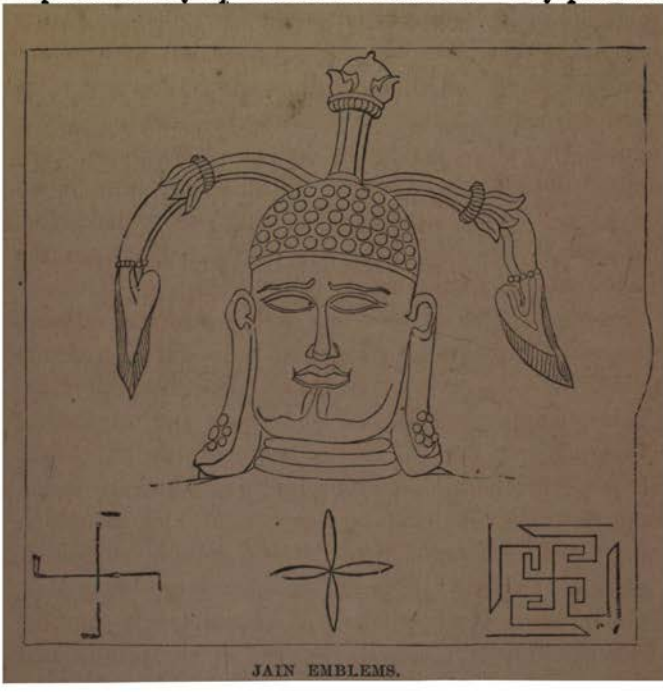
turned his face to the south, and, standing on a large stone, said to his faithful follower Ananda: "To-day for the last time I behold my ancestral kingdom, and here I leave my footprints. One hundred years hence there will be a king, named Asoka, who will reign over this country, and fix his court on this spot."

True enough a hundred years after Buddha's death Asoka took up his permanent abode at Pâtali, and caused a temple to be erected over some footprints which were believed to be Buddha's. And for centuries those footprints were devoutly worshipped by true believers. At length, however, a king arose who had no faith in the sacred relics, and who ordered them to be effaced from the stone; but tradition says the command was more easily given than obeyed, for after every stroke of the chisel, the lines reappeared as before. Afterwards other kings who had heard of the famous stone wished to carry it off to their own dominions; but again tradition asserts the deed was found to be impossible of execution, for, in spite of strenuous efforts, the block could not even be lifted from the ground. Thus the sacred footprints of the great Lord Buddha remained in Pâtali for the edification of the faithful.

Buddha during his lifetime had many opponents, the greatest being Mahâvira, the last of the twenty-four patriarchs of the Jain religion; and at Pâwâ there is a small temple containing the footprints of Mahâvira. Pilgrimages are made yearly to this shrine, for the footprints are counted very sacred, and their adoration is believed to be a cure for various diseases.

Pâwâ is called "the sinless or pure town," and is

one of the holy places of the Jains, who in many respects resemble the Buddhists, differing from the latter chiefly in their ritual and objects of veneration. The Jains believe that their past and future state depend entirely upon their own actions. They practise



JAIN EMBLEMS.

a strict morality, but offer no sacrifices to gods. They hold life, in both man and beast, to be very precious, and are the chief supporters of beast hospitals in India.

The Jains number about half a million, and are a prosperous community like the Parsees. In Calcutta

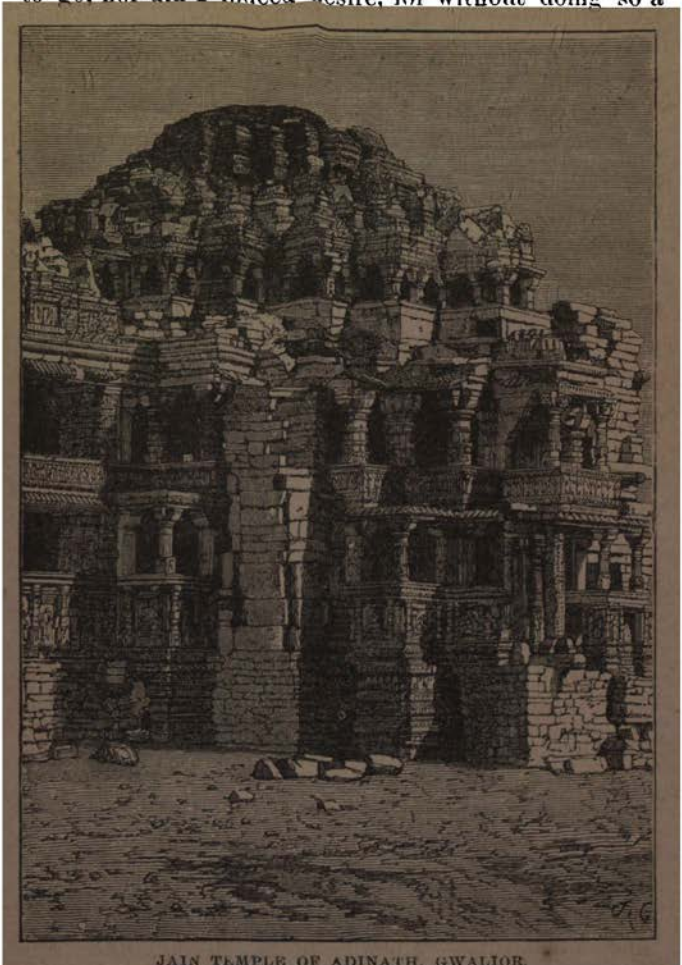
they have a very beautiful temple which is well worth a visit from all tourists, and yet it is often overlooked.

But to return to the sacred footprints of the Jain patriarch at Pâwâ. The stone on which the impressions appear is believed by the Jains to have been the footstool of Mahâvira, who taught his followers sitting out in the open air. The marks were left by constant use, and when the great teacher was taken away his disciples continued to meet at the old familiar place, and having their master no longer to reverence they adored the prints of his feet. And from those far-off days until the present day, according to popular belief, the custom has been kept up. Only, I think, in the East could such statements be credited.

Perhaps the most striking instance of the worship of sacred footprints that I saw in India was at a Hindu temple in Gya, about five miles from Buddha Gya. This temple is called Vishnu-pad, the temple of Vishnu's foot, and is in the heart of the old town. It is a large building as temples go in Northern India, and the porch in front is a very neat, airy structure, and looked at from a little distance appears singularly graceful. Inside the porch hangs a large brass bell, which when I was there was constantly in motion. The clanging of the bell, the cries of the priests, and the prayers of a large gathering of worshippers in the immense porchway, made a deafening noise, and yet, withal, one had the feeling that Vishnu-pad was a place for worship.

The centre of the shrine, the most sacred part of the temple, was guarded by high folding doors plated with silver, and through these doors I was not allowed

to go, nor did I indeed desire, for without doing so a



JAIN TEMPLE OF ADINATH, GWALIOR.

very fair view of the interior, which was lighted by oil-lamps, could be got. In the centre of the shrine

was an octagonal basin coated with silver, and on this basin there was the impress in stone of a foot sixteen inches or so in length. I have a model of it hanging on my study wall which refreshes my memory, and enables me to speak with considerable certainty. The foot is said to be Vishnu's. There were seven worshippers, a priest, a boy assistant, and a cow in the shrine on the occasion of my visit.

The priest was seated at one corner of the octagonal basin, the boy was standing behind him, the seven worshippers were at the other corners, and the cow was walking round the sanctuary and making herself very much at home.

Ganges or Soan water, flowers, and rice were thrown into the basin, and the priest instructed the worshippers at a given signal to bend their heads over the side and touch reverently with their foreheads the sacred footprints. This the devotees proceeded to do; and I was thinking that the scene was impressive, though sad, when the large brown cow upset my gravity by proceeding very quietly and sedately, while the worshippers' heads were bowed, to eat up all the offerings.

It was a strange sight, combining the sublime and the ridiculous, and I could see that the boy behind the priest was highly pleased with the action of the cow, though he said nothing. Sacred cows, of course, are privileged creatures in India, and it is no uncommon thing to see them in temples. The particular cow I am referring to was only doing its duty in eating the offerings, only it should have waited until the worshippers had finished their devotions.

As a final ceremony the priest grasped some lights, and solemnly waved the flames before the faces of the worshippers, who then got up and passed out of the shrine to make room for others.

The story of the origin of the sacred footprints at Vishnu-pad is extraordinary. It is said that Gaya, a pagan monster or demon, got into the bad books of the gods on account of a desire he had to save all sinners from perdition. This seemed shocking to Brahma, Vishnu, and others, and they determined to seize Gaya, and put a stop to his designs. They found the task a difficult one, however. In a Hindu account of the transaction it is recorded that "all the gods and goddesses sat upon him, but were unable to keep him down."

Despairing of conquering Gaya by force of arms, guile was at length resorted to. Brahma in affable tones asked him to sit down and rest, and while the tired demon was in that position his enemies quite unexpectedly and treacherously threw a heavy block of stone upon his body. Even then it is thought that Gaya would not have succumbed if Vishnu had not hit upon the expedient of stamping upon the block of stone. That stamp was too much for the monster underneath, and his life was crushed out of him. And ever since that day and deed the impress of Vishnu's foot has been worshipped by credulous Hindus. It is estimated that probably forty thousand people annually visit the temple of Vishnu-pad at Gaya.

In Ceylon there is a world-renowned sacred footprint on Adam's Peak, one of the highest mountains of the

land. Almost all sects have claimed and do claim an interest in the spot.

Portuguese Christians have been superstitious and credulous enough to declare that the mark on Adam's Peak was the footprint of the Apostle Thomas, who they say visited Ceylon to speak to the people of a Saviour's love. The Mohammedans declare that the mark was left by Adam, who, after the Fall and the expulsion from Paradise, was compelled to perform penance for his sins by standing on one foot on the summit of Adam's Peak, where he remained for ages until God pardoned him. The Hindus maintain that the mark was made by the god Siva, who on one occasion alighted on the mountain when on a journey, and left behind the impression of his foot; and, finally, the Buddhists say that their great master, when on a visit to Ceylon, ascended Adam's Peak and left the imprint of his foot upon a rock as a convincing proof of his superhuman power, and enjoined his followers ever afterwards to adore and worship the impression.

At the present day Adam's Peak is in possession of the Buddhists, who have erected a little temple over the sacred footprints; but they permit Hindus and Mohammedans, and indeed adherents of any and every creed, to visit the spot and worship to their hearts' content.

In the months of February, March, and April, thousands of people perform the somewhat weary pilgrimage, for the roads to the sacred shrine are rough, and in parts near the top of the mountain steep and dangerous. Many accidents have been known to happen, and a few deaths have occurred

in connection with the ascent of Adam's Peak. Iron chains are fixed in the sides of the rock on which the temple is built to assist the climbers.

The sacred footprint is on the very apex of the mountain. It is only called a footprint by worshippers, for any one else looking at it would declare that it was just a cavity in the rock. The cavity is about five feet and a half in length, and two feet five inches in width. There are small raised portions which are meant to delineate the form of the toes, but altogether it is as clumsy an attempt at deception as can well be imagined. Fancy a footprint nearly six feet long!

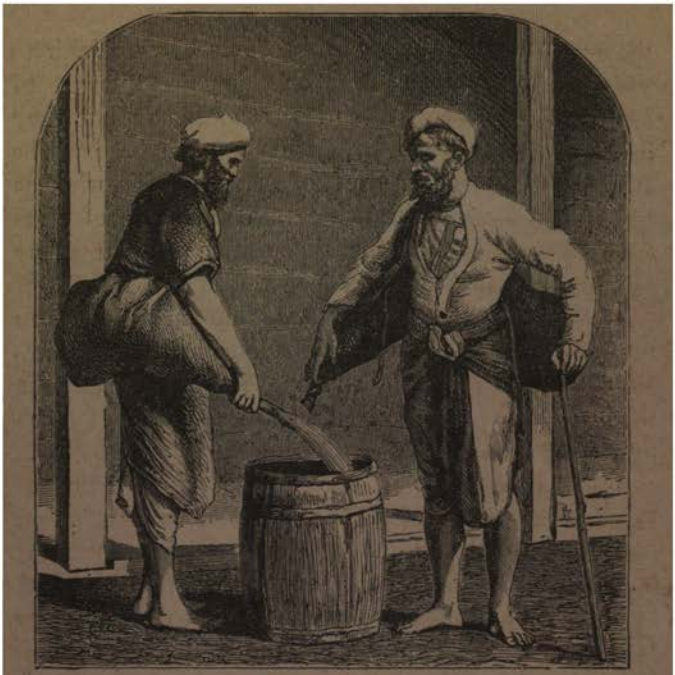
The form of worship is as follows:—The priest stands on the sacred footprint facing the pilgrims, who prostrate themselves on the ground, only raising their hands above their heads in an attitude of supplication. The priest then recites several articles of Buddhistic faith, which the worshippers repeat after him. When the priest has finished, the people rise from the ground, and raise a loud and united shout of thanksgiving and praise, which is echoed and re-echoed from crevice to crevice and crag to crag on the mighty mountain. Then turning to each other the worshippers exchange salutations of peace and goodwill; and relatives warmly embrace each other, and express kindly feelings for each other's happiness.

Before leaving the spot, and they must leave the same day, as no one is allowed to spend a night on the mountain, the pilgrims make offerings to the sacred footprint, according to their means and inclination, some presenting money, others fruits, or grain,

or flowers, and others pieces of cloth wherewith to decorate the temple. The offerings are allowed to remain on the sacred footprint a short time, but they are then taken away by attendants and become the property of the chief priest of Adam's Peak, who, as may easily be imagined, amasses in course of time great wealth. Thus the superstitions of the many are made to minister to the greed of the few.

Is it not extraordinary that human beings can descend so low as to worship so-called sacred footprints? Verily Eastern people are credulous to a degree! Oh the folly and wickedness of such degrading practices!

What the people of the East need to learn as rational creatures is, that the object of their affection and worship should not be the imaginary footprint of a god or goddess, but the one true God Himself, powerful and majestic, putting all enemies under His feet without doubt, but yet merciful and gracious, a God of compassion and love, as revealed to mankind in the person of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who, in moral conduct, in beauty of character, in self-sacrificing deeds for the good of humanity, has left us an example that we should follow in His steps.



WATER-CARRIERS.

VII.

BHEESTIES, OR WATER-CARRIERS.

A SIGHT that is sure to attract the attention of a stranger in India is that of the bheesties or water-carriers, who are to be seen at certain hours of the day busily engaged in watering the dry and dusty roads. Though water-carts are not unknown in the East, yet they are not greatly favoured, and water-men, or bheesties, as they are called, are

preferred. The work, of course, proceeds very slowly, but no one grumbles at that, and water-carriers have the advantage of costing little, for common labour is cheap in India. The bheesti's work is laborious. I have often pitied the poor creatures as I have seen them, in an almost naked condition, and usually lean and lanky, toiling along under the heavy load of a great water-skin called a *mussuk*. This curious arrangement for carrying water is made from goats' skin, and when full looks not unlike an unwieldy pig slung over the shoulder. The water is judiciously squirted out of a small orifice in the *mussuk* on to the thirsty road, and the quantity of liquid that the vessel will hold is something wonderful. It is said that the constant pressure of the wet skin on the back of the bheesti-wallah is the cause of a serious sore, in which is often found a parasitic worm, which occasionally causes death.

In the towns the bheesties, fortunately, have not far to go for their water, whether they want it for the roads, or the public and private gardens, or to supply the empty baths in the homes of the people ; but in country places, and especially in the hill stations, the distance to be traversed sometimes is very great, and thus adds seriously to the exhaustion of the toil.

Miss Cumming, referring in her book on India to the work of bheesties in Simla, where she resided for a time, says : "Our water-carrier was considered fortunate in having at first to go only about half a mile down the Khad to fill his water-skin. But as the season drew on, the water retired lower and lower, so that he and all the other bheesties of the

neighbourhood had to go far down a deep, rocky ravine, and sometimes wait long enough for their turn at the well. It was no joke to have to climb that rugged footpath a dozen times a day, especially with a burden so heavy as a water-skin."

The conclusion we must come to is, that the poor bheesti-wallahs, while they are most useful members of society, have very hard times of it. Indeed, the lot of the labouring man all the world over is hard, and it is well that those who are in better circumstances in life, and more favourably situated, should extend to them the hand of sympathy.

W. Trego Webb, Esq., of the Bengal Education service, in a charming little book of Indian lyrics, calls attention, in a few appropriate words, to the work and worth of the Indian water-carriers.

The words are :—

"Like as the organ-man in public road
Beareth his music with him on his back,
Or as the hawker bends beneath his pack,
The *bheesti* toileth with his watery load
The dusty precincts of our town abode.
The baths, which one could ill endure to lack,
Have oft, when pipe-fed rillet runneth slack
Their debt of moisture to the *bheesti* owed.
So, *bheesti*, mayst thou still at eventide
Subdue the dust, and, foe to all that's dry,
Water the paths where others walk and ride.
Thine is, I ween, no useless destiny;
Yet thou at length, thy goat-skin laid aside,
Subdued thyself, beneath that dust must lie."

There are various tales told of water-carriers which are interesting and instructive, and a few of these I will relate, as they throw light on the beliefs and

customs of the people of the East. Let me begin with one that illustrates the superstition of the Hindu mind in association with idolatry.

In ancient times, it is said, when there was a famine in the land, as, alas! often happens in India, some of the gods and goddesses, as represented by stone idols, did not receive their accustomed morning ablution on account of the scarcity of water. There was one idol in particular, the image of Siva, the third person in the Hindu Trinity, in a certain district, which for months had been neglected. The people of the neighbourhood, in the hour of terrible distress, thought more of their own wants than of the wants of the so-called gods. Indeed, some of the men were heard to say, "Of what use are our gods if they cannot provide water for themselves and for us their worshippers, so that we may all be preserved from death?" The women, dreadfully shocked, exclaimed, "Hush! hush! that is blasphemy: the gods will be angry with us, and send greater and more dreadful troubles upon us if we do not speak respectfully to them and of them." It should be borne in mind that the Hindus believe that all calamities are the work of the gods when they are grieved with mankind. Even the women in this particular case, however, agreed, that out of the little water that could be obtained none could be spared for the ablution of the gods: the latter must be left to take care of themselves.

Thus neglected, of course, many idols, owing to the intense heat, cracked, and otherwise came to grief; and it seemed likely that the idol in question would share the same fate as the others; and it would have done

so but for the altogether unexpected succour of a water-carrier. Amongst the villagers, it appears, a poor *bheesti*, after listening to a conversation one

SIVA.

evening about the god Siva, resolved that, at any cost, the idol should receive, at least, his morning bath. From that time, therefore, whenever the water-carrier drew near the village with water, which he had to bring from a long distance, he stopped to sprinkle the

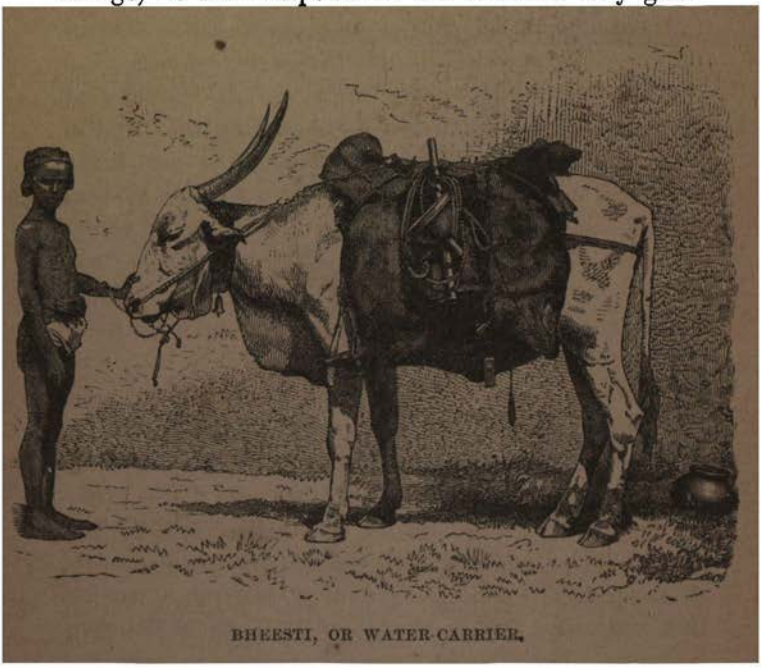
idol. It was, perhaps, at the peril of his life he did it, for every drop of the water was more precious than gold, for the existence of many human beings depended upon the daily supply. However, the man risked something for the sake of Siva, with the firm conviction that, in the long run, the god would reward him.

After the famine had passed away, and prosperity had returned to the land, the *bheesti* was still observed going about his laborious work as poor as ever. His neighbours, who had discovered what he had done, even taunted him, saying, "Behold, your attention to Siva has brought you no reward! It would have been better to have drunk the water yourself!" The man made no reply, but performed day by day his allotted task in his menial position, still holding fast his faith in the merit of the act he had done, and in the justice of his favourite god.

And at the last, the story says, his deserts were fully recognised. One night, just twelve months after the time he had begun to bathe the idol, he had a remarkable dream. Siva came to him in his dream, radiant with beauty and glory, and praised him for his attention during the period of scarcity of water, and promised him that if he would go at midnight on the following day to a certain spot, he would find a herd of buffaloes, and as many of these as he could tie with ropes should be his own.

At the appointed hour the *bheesti* was on the spot with a quantity of rope that he had made or borrowed, and there he found the buffaloes, and with nervous haste he proceeded to tie up as many as he could

before daylight appeared. When at length the sun rose above the horizon, he found himself the fortunate possessor of over two hundred large, strong, and healthy buffaloes. Passing with them from village to village, he soon disposed of his stock at very good



BHEESTI, OR WATER-CARRIER.

prices, and returned to his home and to his wife and children in great joy, and lived ever afterwards in ease and comfort, the admired of all his friends and neighbours. "Thus," the Hindu chronicler says, "was the devout worshipper rewarded for his attention to the god Siva in a day of calamity and sore distress." It is a foolish tale, evidently invented by the priests of

Siva to increase the reverence of the people for the idol. I have related it because it is associated with a *bheesti*, and because it illustrates the superstitious thought and feeling and action of the Hindus on the subject of idolatry.

I have heard of another story in which a *bheesti* figures, which powerfully illustrates the convictions of the Hindus in the matter of caste. It is said that after one of the battles of India, during the time of the great Mutiny, a British officer, who was badly wounded, was heard crying out for water. "Water! water!" he exclaimed; "give me a drink of water, or I die!" Many heard the sad cry, but there was no water at hand: what little had been provided had been consumed. Still the piteous wail was heard of "Water! water! for the love of God!"

At length a *bheesti* was seen coming from a distance with the precious fluid in a *mussuk* on his back. It was brackish water scarcely fit to drink, and it was carried in an old skin bag; but, poor as it was, dirty as it was, oh, how gladly it was received! The wounded Englishman stretched out his hand towards it, eagerly, feverishly, and took it, and put it to his lips, and drank it as joyously and as freely as if it had been water from the freshest and sweetest spring.

Not far away from the British officer lay a native officer, a brave man of the Punjab, who had fought well, but had fallen at last with his face to the foe, covered with wounds. This man also longed for a draught of water to assuage, if possible, the terrible thirst which was upon him, and which added tenfold to the agony of his dying hours.

To the side of the native officer the water-carrier was directed, but the wounded man waved him away. His caste prejudices, his religion, forbade him to take meat or drink from the hands of a low-caste man. It was not that he objected to the water because it was brackish, or dirty—the objection was that it was carried in a skin, and that the *bheesti* was of a lower caste than himself. Two or three Englishmen standing by remonstrated with the officer, telling him that the water would assuage his sufferings, but it was all to no purpose. Casting a greedy look on the life-giving fluid he turned his head resolutely away, and bade the water-carrier depart. The power of caste was stronger than the agony of thirst which was upon the brave but misguided native officer.

The Rev. H. T. Blackett, M.A., referring to caste prejudices in connection with water in his book entitled "Two Years in an Indian Mission," says: "When a Mohammedan water-carrier gives any one water to drink, he pours it from the spout or neck of the skin into the hand, which the thirsty man holds under his mouth, as he squats on the ground, and a Hindu pours it in the same way from a brass or earthen vessel called a *lota*. At the mission school at Delhi there is a Mohammedan and a Hindu to provide water for those of their own religion, the water being always poured into their hands; and the Christian boys receive it through the still more extended medium of a bowl with a long spout, lest they should defile the *lota* by coming too near. One man drinking from another's cup would destroy the caste of both, though some of the Kulin Brahmins do

A WATER-CARRIER, MADRAS.

not object to other people using their *lotas*, as they consider themselves so infinitely superior to every one else as to be unaffected by such trifles. Water, moreover, thrown over a man will impair his caste."

In short, caste holds a demoralising sway over the people of India, and is one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to the prosperity of the country, and to the acceptance by the people of our Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Yes, caste, in my judgment, more than anything else stands in the way of the millions of India receiving Him, whom the Bible speaks of as "the Water of Life." Everything, therefore, that can be done to break down caste rules and restrictions should be done.

Some time ago there appeared in the *Christian Miscellany* a story concerning *bheesties*, which I am sure my young readers will be glad to know. It was as follows :—

"Outside a *serai*, or resting-place for travellers, sat in the moonlight four men, smoking their *hookahs*, or Indian pipes, and having one of those long talks which natives of the East most dearly love, and which they sometimes prolong far into the night. Perhaps the most striking figure of the group was a venerable Sikh, whose hair and beard, never touched by razor, were now of silvery whiteness. The other men were of various nationalities, but used Urdu as a tongue common to all.

"The first speaker, a Persian, was giving a flowery account of his own country, which none of the others had ever seen. *Such* horses, *such* fruits, *such* cities, he described, that to hear him one might think that

Persia, of all the lands of earth, was the most beautiful and the most blest.

"'And our men are unmatched for size and strength,' pursued the speaker, using a good deal of gesticulation. 'I am one of a family of ten sons, and not one of my brothers but is taller and stronger than I am. What would you say to our *bheesti*? He is some eight feet in height, and carries a *mussuk* made of the hide of an ox, which, when full, five of your ordinary men could not lift!'

"Dominie Sampson at these statements would have exclaimed, 'Pro-di-gi-ous!' The friends of the Persian merely remarked, 'Wah! wah!' though the sage old Sikh rather incredulously shook his head, and muttered in his beard, 'I should like to see such a *bheesti*!'

"Then spoke a fine tall Afghan: 'I could tell you of a *bheesti* compared to whom your Persian *bheesti* is but an emmet. I know one who can carry a *mussuk* as big as a mountain, and as white as the snows on the Himalayas. This water-carrier can travel thousands of miles without stopping or feeling weary, sometimes whistling and sometimes howling as he goes.'

"'Pro-di-gi-ous!'—No! 'Wah! wah!' cried the listeners. The Persian coloured, and angrily said, 'I will not believe such a pack of lies!'

"'Oh, brother!' remarked the old Sikh, smiling, 'there is more truth in the Afghan's tale than in thine. Look yonder,' he continued, as a white cloud passed over the face of the moon, 'and listen to the rushing blast which is shaking the leaves of yon

palms. The wind is the mighty *bheesti* whom the great Creator employs to bear swiftly the huge white *mussuks* which convey this gift of rain. The words of the Afghan are not the words of folly.'

"'Thou art wise, O Father!' said the youngest man in the group, who had hitherto spoken but little. 'Now listen, whilst I tell of a third *bheesti*; not tall like the first, nor strong like the second, but bearing a more wonderful *mussuk* than either. This *mussuk* is not longer than my hand. It is very old, too, and it is carried by a feeble man.'

"'Useless! good for nothing!' exclaimed the Persian, somewhat rudely interrupting the narrative.

"'Listen before you say so,' calmly replied the speaker. 'In this *mussuk* is water of such wonderful virtue, that if but a few drops fall on good soil a spring of surpassing sweetness bursts forth, sometimes spreading and spreading, till first a brook, then a wide stream, and then a glorious river appears. The most learned cannot calculate, nor ages on ages limit, the effects of a few living drops from that blessed *mussuk*.'

"The Persian and Afghan uttered exclamations of surprise, but a thoughtful inquiring look was on the face of the aged Sikh, who whispered, 'Where can that *mussuk* be seen?'

"'Here,' replied the speaker, a Bengali, as he drew a Bible from his vest. 'This book contains the word of God; and its contents, when received with faith, are spirit and life.'

"'It is the Christian's Shaster!' said the old Sikh, raising his hand to his brow in token of respect.

"'Let me pour forth some drops of the living water,' said the Bengali, who was a native Evangelist; 'the moonshine is so bright that I can by it read a little from the pages which I know and love so well.'

"No one made any objection. The Persian listened with curiosity, and the Afghan with some attention, but it was on the old Sikh that the holy words fell like the rain from heaven. This was not the first time that he had drunk from the precious *mussuk* of inspired Truth, and its water became to him as a stream of life, which would never fail him till time should be lost in eternity."

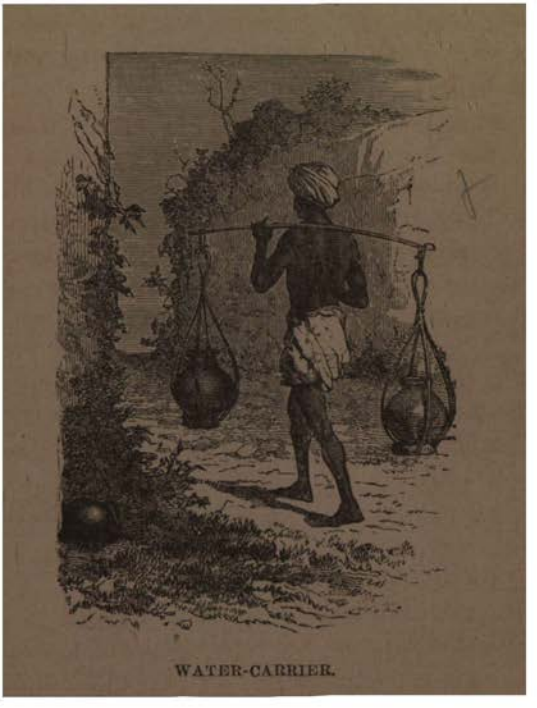
And what passage of Scripture did the Evangelist read? The *Christian Miscellany*, in telling the story, did not say, but probably it was the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to John, the chapter in which we read these words: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

Now is there not one great lesson we may all learn from the foregoing narrative? Just this, that we may all be *bheesties*, yea, that God wishes us to be water-carriers. Like the Bengali Evangelist, we may carry about with us, wherever we go, the *mussuk* of Divine Truth, scattering a drop here and a drop there, on the dry and thirsty land of the human heart.

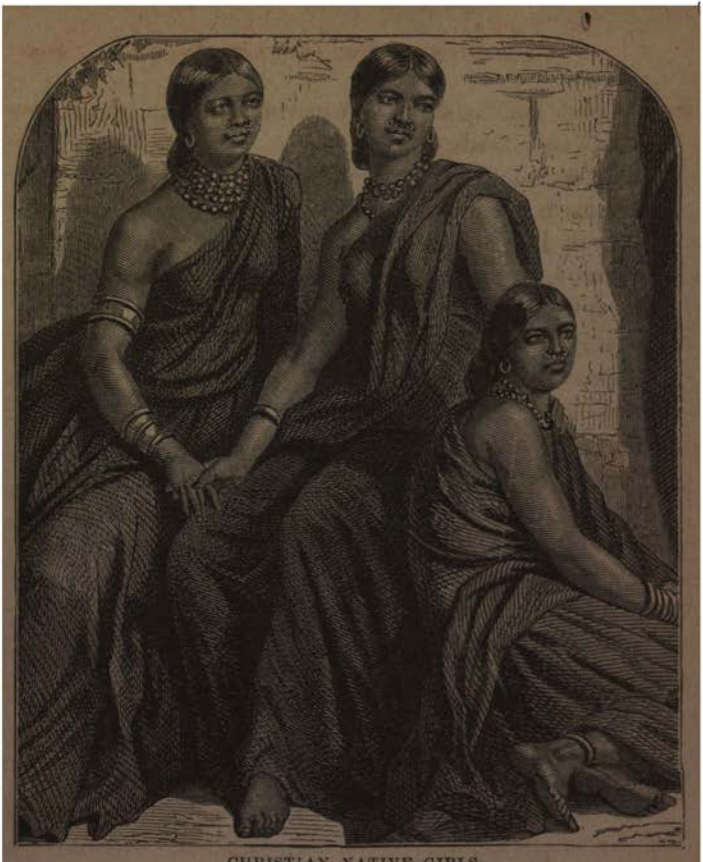
India needs an army of Christian *bheesties*, to carry the precious "water of life" far and wide, and to cry aloud as they go, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters! The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that

is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

I pray that my young readers may obtain for themselves a copious supply from the "pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," and then listen to the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ who has said, "Freely ye have received, freely give."



WATER-CARRIER.



CHRISTIAN NATIVE GIRLS.

VIII.

BRAVE YOUNG CONVERTS.

IT will be clearly understood by those who have read this book so far, that it must be no light matter for the natives of India to give up their ancestral religion and embrace Christianity. And yet every year some of the people receive grace

so to do. The labours of our missionaries and other servants of Christ in India are not in vain, for the word of truth finds a lodging place in many hearts; and though perhaps the majority who receive the word gladly remain secret disciples, there are a few who are bold enough and brave enough to declare before all the world that they are Christians. And of such I would now write.

These converts come from all classes of society, and are of both sexes, and of all ages. My intention, however, is only to deal with the young in this chapter. I wish my readers in Europe to see that amongst the young people of India may be found brave and noble characters, who for Christ's sake shrink from no sacrifice and fear no danger. Would that both in the West and the East there were more young people with the courage of their convictions in things moral and spiritual!

A while ago there was in Bangalore a young Brahmin who attended a mission school, first as a scholar and then as a teacher. He was a clever and promising youth, and his friends had hopes of his making his mark in life; but these hopes were frustrated, or at least his friends thought so, by his announcement one day that he was seriously thinking of becoming a Christian,—yea, that he was a Christian at heart, and was making up his mind to confess his faith publicly by baptism.

The reading of the Bible, the teaching of the missionaries, and the holy, consistent lives of the latter, had wrought this change in the feelings and convictions of the young Brahmin, and led him to forsake

idolatry. It was a genuine case of conversion by conviction, and when the missionaries heard thereof they were glad. The youth's friends, however, were beside themselves with anger, and adopted all kinds of harsh measures to turn the young man from his resolve to be baptised.

Persecution, as so often happens, but deepened the convictions of the convert and strengthened his resolves ; and one day he overcame all his fears, and proceeding to the native Christian Church at Bangalore connected with the London Missionary Society, was baptised in the presence of a large congregation, after answering decidedly and firmly the questions put to him with regard to his abandonment of Hinduism and trust in the Saviour.

Even after the baptism the relatives of this young man did not cease their persecution and their efforts to turn the new convert from his trust in Jesus, but all was in vain. The enraged Hindus then said, "The missionaries have given you a drug to turn your mind" ; but they were met with the quiet and wise rejoinder, "No ! God has given me His Spirit to change my heart." Is not such moral courage in its way heroic ?

A similar story comes from Belgaum. Shiddhappa, a native of Hubli, the son of a basket-maker, made the acquaintance of some Christian people, while he was at school, who lent him books by which he was convinced of the folly of idol worship. Aspiring to the study of English, the lad joined first one school and then another, and finally settled at the London Mission School at Belgaum.

There his knowledge of Christian truth increased, and his impressions of the uselessness of idolatry deepened; and his letters home to his parents showed signs of the change that was taking place in him, by frequent references to Christianity, which he contrasted with Hinduism to the disadvantage of the latter.

Now Shiddhappa had a sister whom he tenderly loved, and as she was ill,—indeed, sick unto death,—the boy was called home to see her, with the hope that a change to his native village and a talk with his friends would lead his thoughts away from the new truths he had imbibed. However, the visit had the opposite effect, for the sight of his dying sister brought very vividly before his mind words he had heard concerning Christ and the life hereafter. The words were, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Shiddhappa felt that it would be good for all of them if they did believe the beautiful and comforting words.

Thereupon he spoke to his friends of his convictions, and intimated that on his return to Belgaum he would be baptised, and would cast in his lot with the followers of Christ. Great was the grief of his relatives at the announcement; and when entreaty proved of no avail in altering the young man's decision, an uncle, more irascible than the rest, locked him up in a room in his house, and vowed that he should never leave it until he had promised to think no more of Christianity.

Shiddhappa bore all this ill-treatment with patience, but did not in the least waver in his resolution, and when a favourable opportunity presented itself he escaped from his stern relative's custody, and fled to Belgaum, where he rejoined the missionaries.

His mother, however, was soon upon his track. Leaving her dying daughter she hurried to the rescue, if possible, of her son, from what she conceived to be worse than death—viz., Christian baptism. The interview between mother and child was touching in the extreme. She pleaded passionately with her boy not to forsake the faith of his forefathers and bring disgrace upon the family name. She promised to let the lad have everything that his heart could wish in every other direction, if he would only renounce his intention of becoming a Christian. But the faith of Shiddhappa was fixed ; and while he sought to soothe and comfort his mother with kind words, he yet let her know that all her arguments and pleading were in vain.

Then the sorrowful lady turned to the missionaries who were standing by and piteously exclaimed, "There are plenty of others who will join you, spare my son!" The missionaries, of course, told her that the decision lay entirely with her boy, but that they hoped he would be true to his love for Christ, as the change from Hinduism to Christianity could not be other than great gain, and was rather a matter for rejoicing than for sorrow.

To bring the painful interview to an end, Shiddhappa took some water from a Christian child, and at once broke caste by drinking it. "There, mother," he said,

"my caste is broken. You see that I am determined to follow my religious convictions." But even then the determined mother did not give up hope of success in her mission, for with a look of inexpressible sorrow in her face she exclaimed, "Do you think I shall leave you? No, not even for that!"

Eventually, however, the distressed lady saw that nothing could shake the faith of her son in Christianity; and then, though reluctantly, she left him with the missionaries, and returned almost broken-hearted to resume her care of her dying daughter.

Shiddhappa was baptised soon after. We can see, however, how terribly hard it must have been to the youth to run counter to the wishes of his parents, and give his dear mother such sorrow of spirit. Such a case helps us to understand those strange words of Christ, which read, "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

The bitter opposition of the women of India to Christianity is a truth that is constantly being manifested in such scenes as that I have just recorded. Therefore the need for Zenana Missions is great. Lady missionaries are constantly in demand, who

will enter the homes of the people of India, and strike at the root of idolatry, the stronghold of Hinduism—the ignorance and bigotry of the women of the East.

Mrs. Hewlett of Benares, in an account of Zenana work in the sacred city of the Hindus, says: "A Brahmin lady here, whose son was anxious to become a Christian, and who is now a preacher of the Gospel, once said to him, falling down at his feet, with tears flowing down her cheeks, 'Be assured that the moment you are baptised I shall shed my blood at the door of the missionary who will baptise you.'" The dreadful threat was not fulfilled, but it was meant at the time it was uttered; and there have been cases known of mothers doing themselves grievous bodily harm on the occasion of the baptism of a child. Tender-hearted sons, we may be sure, are much influenced by such threats, and it requires a great deal of courage to go steadily on in the path of Christian duty in the face of a mother's tears, prayers, and hysterical pleadings.

Though females as a rule in India are very slow to declare themselves Christians, yet when they do so they are as brave as their husbands or brothers. I recall the case of a young person, who, about five years ago, was greatly persecuted for her faith at Kelayapuram in Quilon, South India. She was an orphan, living with and looking after the house of her only brother, who was a bigoted Hindu, and a hard-hearted, cruel man.

Kota was the name of the young woman. She made friends with some Christians living in the

district, and eventually, notwithstanding the threats of her brother, joined herself to a Christian Church. Then commenced a series of petty persecutions, which reached their climax one day in personal violence. Kota, on her return from service one Sunday, was seized by her brother, and severely beaten. Then, with a refinement of cruelty seldom witnessed, the poor girl was tied to a tree, at the foot of which was a flourishing colony of red ants.

In a little while Kota was completely covered with the insects, which bit her, and gave her great pain. When she cried out for pity, her brother only mocked her, and going up to her struck her savagely. Again the poor girl wept under the stings of the ants and the blows of her brother, and prayed aloud in her agony. "Yes, pray!" said her inhuman tormentor. "Call on Jesus and the catechist to come to your help!"

When Kota heard the name of her Lord thus taken in vain, she ceased her tears, remembering that she was a Christian, and that as such she must be prepared, in a heathen land, to suffer persecution. Not another cry did she raise; but with the courage of a martyr endured her aches and pains, until even the stony heart of her brother was touched, and after some hours of torment she was released by him with the remark that she was a brave girl, at any rate, though a foolish one for becoming a Christian.

Poor Kota! it was some time before she recovered from the physical effects of that day of ill-treatment. The trial, however, strengthened her faith and ennobled her character. Truly she was made perfect through suffering!

From South India let us journey in thought to the extreme North, and there, also, cases are constantly being reported of victory over weakness and fears, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In a report of work, which I once received from the Rev. H. Coley, now of London, but then of Almora, I find these words: "At Almora we have had the pleasure of baptising several persons during the past few weeks. One was an old woman, named Jasia, for many years *ayah* in Mr. Budden's household. She had received a good deal of instruction, and prayer on her behalf has been offered for many a year. Now, at last, in her old age, she has found faith and courage to confess Christ openly; and our hearts are glad.

"The next was Tulsi, a nice little maiden of about twelve years of age. She, too, had been under influence in the Bazaar Girls' School, and in joining our little Christian community followed the example of her sister, who was baptised from the same school in 1879.

"Another was a young man from a distant village. He had been hindered by the intervention of his relatives, and kept a close prisoner at home for some time. But he at last regained his liberty, and speedily made his way back to us. His mother came again in search of him. But his steadfast determination to seek a Saviour in Christ Jesus touched her heart. Though filled with wrath and indignation against us when she came, a great change took place. She quietly watched the ceremony, and, it is not improbable, may herself, before long, be seeking to join the same Master as her son. We thank God for these signs of His mighty

working, and would ask our friends to remember these 'little ones' in their prayers."

At Bankura in Bengal there was, two years ago, a most interesting case of baptism. It was that of a Brahmin youth named Kuloda. This young man attended the Wesleyan Mission High School, and one day during the Bible lesson the missionary found occasion to make some remarks on the gods of the Hindus. From what was said Kuloda was impressed with the idea that it was in vain to trust in idols for any good, and he began to inquire into religious matters, and to investigate the teaching of the New Testament with respect to Christ as the one and only Saviour of the human race.

The result was that the young man renounced Hinduism, and told his friends that he was about to be baptised. The usual persecutions followed, but did not damp the enthusiastic ardour of the young convert, who fixed Christmas Day for his public admittance, by the rite of baptism, into the Christian Church.

Notwithstanding the fierce opposition of friends, Kuloda forced his way to the Wesleyan Chapel; and there, amidst the rejoicing of God's people, he was baptised into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. When he returned home every effort was made to induce the young man to recant and go back to Hinduism, but he remained steadfast in the faith, saying that he could never deny the Lord Jesus who had died for him on the Cross of Calvary.

Baffled in their efforts to alter the decision of the brave youth, his friends vented their rage on the following day on the heads of the missionaries, whom

they stopped as they were driving through the town, and attacked with dust and stones and brickbats. However, no very great harm was done; and the missionaries have since had reason to believe that the things which were done against them have turned rather to the furtherance of the Gospel.

When in Calcutta I frequently met a native Christian gentleman called Atul Krishna Naj. It is over twenty years since he was baptised, but I refer to his case now because it is worthy of special notice in association with an event which happened comparatively recently.

When Atul Babu decided to become a Christian, he was taken into the house of that fine missionary, the late Rev. S. J. Hill of Berhampore, who, after a time, baptised the young man amidst a scene of great excitement. The whole neighbourhood was enraged at the event, for Atul was a youth of good parts. The anger of the parents, however, was the most intense, and the father banished the lad from home, and vowed that he would never look upon his face again.

Atul found the Scripture true which says, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." He obtained remunerative employment under Government, and made many kind friends amongst the Christians, but still it was a great grief to him to be at variance with his relatives, and he did all he could to soften their hearts towards him. After a few years his mother could bear the separation no longer, and sent for him to visit the house after dark. His father at such times either left the house or kept entirely out of sight. Thus for twenty long

years this unnatural state of things continued; but at last, a while back, the father's heart relented and a complete reconciliation has been effected.

Let me tell the rest of the story in the words of the Rev. W. B. Phillips of Calcutta, an intimate friend of Atul Babu. Mr. Phillips says: "This morning Atul Babu and I met. It was a treat once more to shake hands, look each other in the face, and talk of the many associations that we have in common. A friendship spreading over fourteen years, cemented by loyalty to the same Lord, and marked by long co-operation in Christian work, affords many topics for happy converse.

"He was long the secretary of our Berhampore Total Abstinence Society. Just recently he has become secretary to a similar society started in Calcutta. He is also a teacher in the Sunday School. After talking freely for some time about various things, he suddenly said, 'I have a piece of good news for you.' 'Indeed! what may that be?' 'My father has spoken to me.' As these words were uttered, and the full depth of their meaning grew upon him, his eyes filled with tears. All other thoughts were driven from my own mind, and I seemed to stand before the gathered emotions of twenty years.

"Here was one who, at the age of twenty-two, had said before God and man: 'I will follow Christ, whatever it may cost.' At the very threshold it had cost the bitterest grief of loving, indulgent parents; it had raised a barrier which seemed to shut him off from them for ever. Years came and went; his eldest child died; others were born, grew up, and attended

school ; sickness, disappointment, and sadness blended with his life ; and yet through all the changes of time his father's heart never melted—no word of sympathy ever fell upon his ears.

"Twenty years ! what a long time it seems never to hear a word from the lips of a father living within a few hundred yards ! To have no smile of a grandfather on one's children ! No wonder that the tears stood in his eyes as he was able at last, after twenty years, to say : 'My father has spoken to me.' My own heart was much moved. I stood in the presence of one to whom 'the Cross of Christ' had meant such a bitterness as I had never known."

Now let me give just another instance of youthful bravery for Christ's sake, which happened in Calcutta in 1891.

Lalit Kumar Ghose, a young Hindu of a thoughtful turn of mind, borrowed a copy of the Bible, about which he had heard much, to see for himself what the Christian Scriptures were. The Book was a revelation to him, and he speedily saw how superior was its teaching to anything that the Hindu Shasters contained. Thereupon he sought the companionship of Christians, and the guidance of missionaries, which coming to the ears of his friends, brought upon the young man much persecution.

However, grace was given to him to bear meekly every trial, and on Sunday morning, August 23rd, 1891, he was baptised in Union Chapel—the church of which I was formerly minister. The service is said to have been a most impressive one, and was attended by many young people, who were deeply

affected by the outspokenness and bravery of the new convert.

In his short statement of belief addressed to the congregation, Lalit Kumar said, amongst other things: "I have implicit faith in the Christian religion. I believe Jesus to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, who gave Himself for sinners. My hungry soul has been satisfied, my thirst has been quenched. Now I come forward to confess my Saviour publicly, by taking the external sign of baptism. I accept Jesus as my Saviour before everybody here, and I earnestly beseech you to pray that I may be kept in the faith to the last."

After his baptism the young man went to live with the missionaries of the London Missionary Society at Bhowanipore, where he carried on his studies in the Society's college, giving great satisfaction to his Christian friends. It was hoped that his relatives would leave him at peace, but no, they were only waiting a favourable opportunity to get him again into their power.

It happened one day that the new convert was out alone walking, and ere he was aware of their intentions his uncle and other relations seized him and carried him off, first to Gobra, and then to his home at Gouhati, where every pressure was brought to bear upon him to renounce Christianity.

The brave lad declined even to think of such a thing, and then insults and stripes were the portion of his cup, but he still held fast his integrity. He was kept a close prisoner for a time, but through the help of Mr. Burdett, a missionary living in the

disguise, he effected his escape. However, he was recaptured, and persecutions began afresh, but still he remained true to Christ; and once more he effected his escape, and this time succeeded in reaching his friends at Bhowanipore, who received him with open arms. And there the young man has remained ever since, unmolested, his relatives evidently having given up the struggle in despair. This case shows how many and how great are the difficulties in the way of a young Hindu confessing his faith in Christ. All honour to such as Lalit Kumar Ghose, who have the courage of their beliefs!

Not all young men in India, however, are as brave as Lalit Kumar or Atul Babu, or the others I have mentioned. There are many who, though they have leanings towards Christianity and are convinced of the claims of Christianity upon them, yet have not the courage to forsake all for Christ's sake. More than one such case have I known myself. Again and again I have said to an anxious inquirer, "I am convinced that you are a Christian." "I am! I am!" has been the reply, "but I dare not confess it to my friends. I fear persecution."

Let me plead with my young readers of the West for their sympathy and prayers on behalf of the young people of the East. The advent of that day is earnestly to be desired when all the world over young men and maidens will be able to say, "We fear God: but we have no other fear!"

THE END.

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